Week ending April 26 1952 Every Wednesday Fourpence

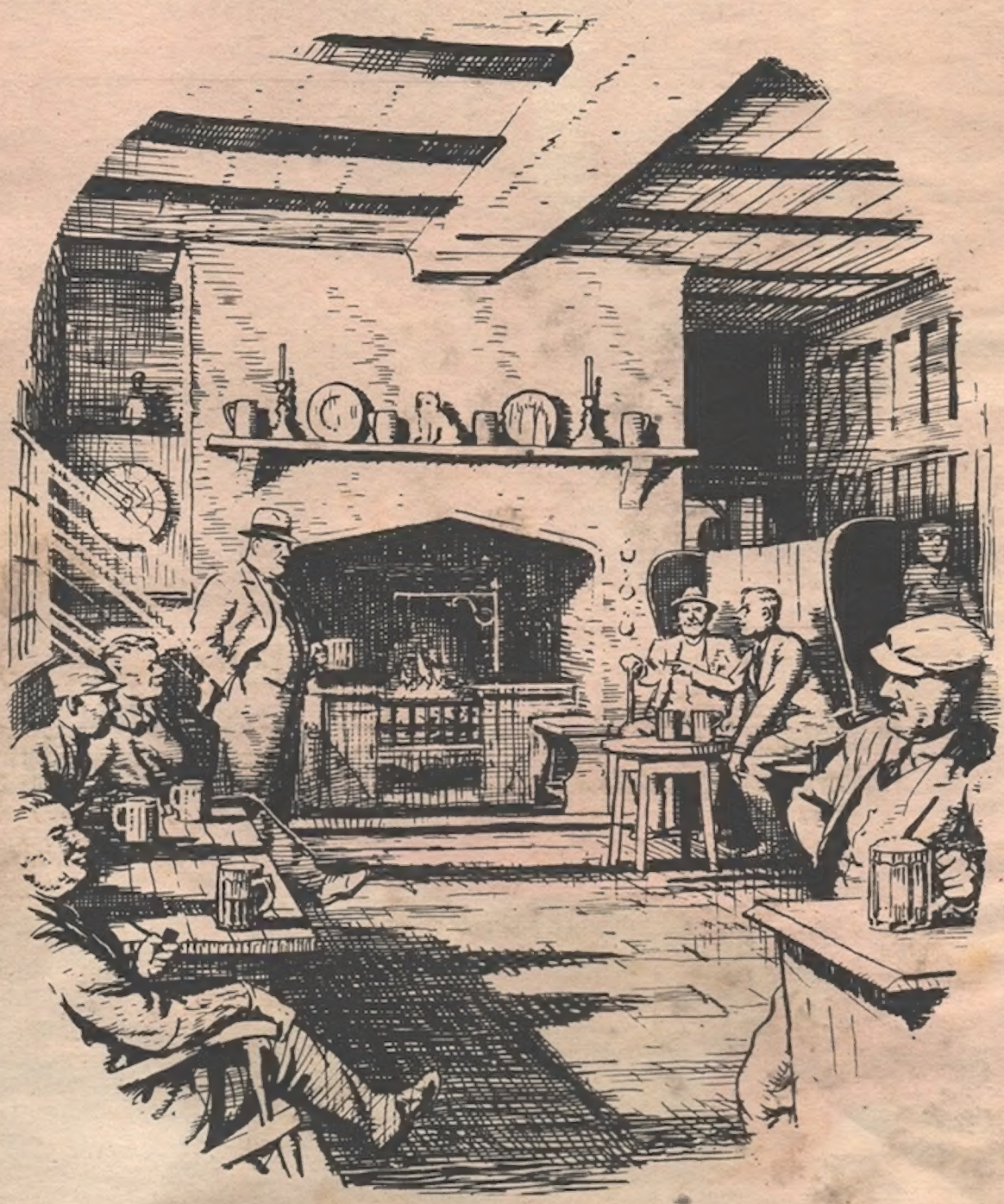
JOHN BULL

AGATHA CHRISTIE

"They Do It With Mirrors"

Her new mystery thriller starts in this issue

Welcome to the Inn



beer is best

Issued by the Brewers' Society, 42 Portman Square, London, W.1

Third time lucky?

CLAUDETTE COLBERT IS down at the Pinewood Studios, just outside London, making a new British film, *The Planter's Wife*. Claude Rains is in Paris, on location work for a British picture based on the Georges Simenon thriller, *The Man Who Watched the Trains Go By*. Cesar Romero is at a small studio in West London making another new film. Van Heflin and Wanda Hendrix—two other Hollywood stars—have been working at Elstree.

These names mean something. For the fact is that British film production, after years of recurrent crisis and depression, at last shows signs of a sensible recovery.

There is a long way to go yet. There have been appalling mistakes in the past. But there are indications that lessons have been learned.

IT is probable that a steady supply of worthwhile British films is now assured. They are likely to be roughly one in three of the leading features in the cinema programmes for the rest of this year—the other two coming, as usual, from Hollywood.

There was a time when British film producers were much more ambitious than this. A few years ago people were hoping that British films would swiftly conquer the whole world.

HOPES of this sort produced the second and last big British film boom, and the swift collapse. The balloon went up—and came down when the hot air had spent itself.

Now, after studio upon studio has been closed through lack of finance, it looks as though the industry has touched bottom and is starting to recover.

Why is this? First, because of the Board of Trade's decision to maintain the present British film "quota"—the percentage of British films which exhibitors are required to show by law. This figure has been thirty per cent of the top features for the last year, and has been renewed at the same rate.

Producers are satisfied with the figure, and feel that they can make enough good films to justify it.

Secondly, British producers have been helped by what is known in the film trade as the Eady Fund—a small but vital levy on total cinema takings which is ploughed back to the British studios.

SIR HENRY FRENCH, Director-General of the British Film Producers' Association, says that the Eady Fund has saved the British film studios financially. It has made it possible for producers to turn out reasonably good pictures which are self-supporting in the British market.

In other words, producers now know the size of their cloth and can cut it accordingly.

Films are now being made more modestly, and more shrewdly. Producers are starting to pay their way, and the number of films in production should rise.

THIS is good news. There is a huge and faithful public for good British films—but it is not an uncritical public, and it will not tolerate second-rate goods.

Having got their house into some sort of order, the film producers must now keep it tidy. They must not develop fancy ambitions and start spending fortunes chasing the mirage of world film markets, which scarcely exist for British films anyway. This would merely repeat the disasters of the past.

BUT they must remember that only well-made, intelligent pictures are good enough.

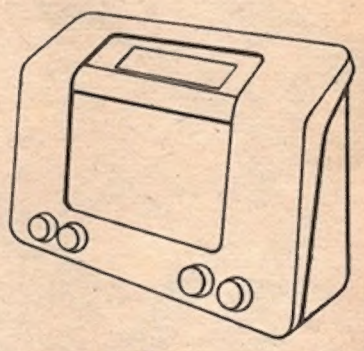
Any return to the shoddy cheese-paring of the old "quota quickies"—the slapdash films which ruined the reputation of British producers before the war—would be fatal.

The studios must make sure that they give a solid evening's entertainment in return for the patrons' money. That is the only way to put British film production permanently on a sound footing.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

A MAN usually looks sheepish when he tells his office colleagues that he has become engaged. But for a woman it's a great day when she can show off her brand-new engagement ring to the other girls—and woe betide anyone who breaks up the session with demand for work. Artist K. J. Petts often asks the girls in his agent's office about their latest romances. He even gives them fatherly advice, "but they never take it."

THE BRASS IS THE TROUBLE



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JOHN BULL 189 HIGH HOLBORN LONDON W.C.1

April 26, 1952 VOL. 91 No. 2391 PHONE: TEMPLE BAR 2468 GRAMS: HEROICALLY, WESTCENT, LONDON

FREE SPEECH

Why don't we start work earlier?

DURING my holiday in Norway last year, I noticed that, in the family with whom I stayed, everyone was home from work soon after three o'clock in the afternoon. This meant that they had many hours of sunshine left for swimming and other sports.

They told me that in winter they started work at nine and finished at four, taking sandwiches and coffee with them to eat at their desks, instead of using an hour for lunch as we do here. In summer, they start and finish an hour earlier. It seemed to me an excellent arrangement, and I wonder why we do not do something like it in Britain. —A. F., London, S.E.6.

Dancing's Lost Pleasure

LOOKING through my souvenirs, I came across a programme for a ball I attended some years ago. How pleasantly different were dances in those days, with their courteous requests for the pleasure of a dance. I cannot help comparing them with the present day, when young men merely say, "Dance?" or just nod with eyebrows raised questioningly when approaching a prospective partner. I am only twenty-six and have been married just over five years, but I am grateful that my husband never forgets these little courtesies. —E. G., Southport, Lancs.

Do Women Need Jobs?

YOUR CORRESPONDENT who wrote ("Free Speech," April 5) that, although her husband earns £600 a year, she has to have a part-time job to give her three children the things they need, seems to be confusing *needs* with *wants*. My salary averages £400-£500 a year and I have two children, but my wife and I agree that we have all we need. There are many things we would like to make our home more luxurious, but we put the pleasure we derive from our children before these things.—ROBERT SNELLING, 71 Milne Park East, New Addington, Surrey.

Gifts Turned Back

SINCE I WROTE you a letter ("Free Speech," February 16) protesting over the Customs charges on gift parcels sent from America to people in England, many British people have written to tell me that they have had to refuse gifts because of the scandalous duty and purchase tax demanded. A woman in Birmingham was asked to pay £1 18s. on a package containing a pair of nylons and two cheap chain-store bracelets. Another writer in Kent was charged 7s. 6d. on a tin of dried egg. This has gone on too long and it is high time that some of these stupid regulations were revised.—MRS. PEGGY VAN DOREN, Mountain View, California, U.S.A.

. . . I bought a one-pound tin of tobacco and sent it to my father in Northern Ireland. It cost seventy-five cents (about 5s. 3d.). When delivered, it was taxed £3 1s. 11d. This was so ridiculous that my father refused it.—MRS. MAY STEVENSON, 419 13th Street, Alamogordo, New Mexico, U.S.A.

Windfall From Junk

SPRING CLEANING HAS brought me a windfall. For years the attic had not been touched, but when we decided to convert it into a playroom we made a clean sweep. A surprisingly lucrative trip to an antique dealer resulted, for Victorian junk has returned to fashion. An alabaster statue of a maiden disrobing, which we threw out years ago, sold for just under £4. Vases, decanters and jugs fetched from 10s. to 40s. each. A framed embroidery went for 25s., an old silk blouse for £1, and a couple of coloured inset glass paperweights for 30s. each. I still have a mixture of buttons, ear-rings, jet beads and wax bouquets which should bring anything from 5s. each.—H. D., Maidenhead, Berks.

Grateful To Spiritualism

AFTER READING Reginald M. Lester's articles, "Survival After Death," which began in JOHN BULL on March 22, I should like to testify to what spiritualism has done for me since my husband passed away suddenly about a year ago. It has given me an interest in life when I felt I had come to the end of everything and has brought back the same loving husband, still interested in my welfare, never far away and always ready to help in my daily perplexities. It has answered many questions about religion and life and has offered (although I did not ask for this) healing for my infantile paralysis of twenty-five years' standing. This healing is already half way to completion. I am deeply grateful and pleased to see that you have had the courage to air this controversial but very important subject.—MRS. HELEN THOMPSON, 47 Temple Drive, Nuthall, Nottingham.

. . . At the only spiritualist séance I ever attended, about twenty people were present. I was not known to the medium. I stared at her amusedly as she appeared to go into a trance, but in a few moments her face changed to that of my dead mother. When she spoke, it was with my mother's Edinburgh accent and I was so dumbfounded that I could not speak. I am a Catholic, a sceptic where spiritualism is concerned, and so I account for the "transfiguration" as a trick of eyesight and ear.—MISS ELSPETH STEWART, 53 Corsehill Street, S.W.16.

Dining Car Lament

TRAVELLING by train between London and Birmingham, I took my seat in the dining-car. The waiter brought me lunch: tomato juice, followed by grilled ham, boiled potatoes and peas. It sounded fine, but the grilled ham turned out to be tinned luncheon meat. The sweet was ice-cream, with no alternative, except biscuits and cheese. I finished with coffee, and the bill was 6s. 6d. Only twelve people were taking lunch.—A. G. BILLINGTON, Vale House, Vale, Todmorden, Lancs.

Love At First Sight

WHEN I MET MY HUSBAND I was seventeen, the same age as the daughter of your correspondent who asks ("Free Speech," April 5) what is the right age for a girl to be married. In our case, it was love at first sight and we were married within a few months. Now we have four lovely children and I would not change my life for all the riches in the world.—MRS. FLORENCE MOSTON, 37 Warren Road, Chell Heath, Staffs.

. . . She is very lucky to have no financial qualms about marriage as young as seventeen. I am not a cynical old maid. I am nineteen.—MISS DOREEN BAGGALEY, Central Hall, Stafford Street, Stoke-on-Trent.

. . . There should be a law prohibiting anyone under twenty-one becoming engaged, and no engagement should last less than two years.—A. GRIFFIN, 43 Coval Road, London, S.W.14.

Letters intended for publication should be marked "Free Speech" and include the sender's full name and address. John Bull pays a guinea for every letter printed. Readers with personal problems should send inquiries (other than medical) to John Bull Free Advice Service with a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

TAKE MY TIP

A COBBLER once told me how to make shoes last much longer. "Give the leather soles two or three coats of copal varnish," he said. "If you put on a fresh coat every week, the soles will last for years."

Uppers, he told me, will never crack if they are treated with petroleum jelly. Warm the jelly slightly and rub it well in.

Then stuff the shoes with newspapers and leave them a couple of days. Rub the remainder off, and polish.—George Wheeler, Exeter, Devon.

Have you, *like this reader, a practical tip, or factual advice, that you think is worth passing on? Is it an original idea? Will it show other readers how to carry out a useful job in a better way, and perhaps save them money?* JOHN BULL *will pay three guineas for each reader's tip selected for publication. Address contributions to TAKE MY TIP,* JOHN BULL, *189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1, including (if they help) diagrams or photographs with the text. The first three-guinea tip will appear in the May 10 issue.*

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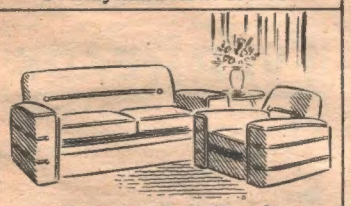

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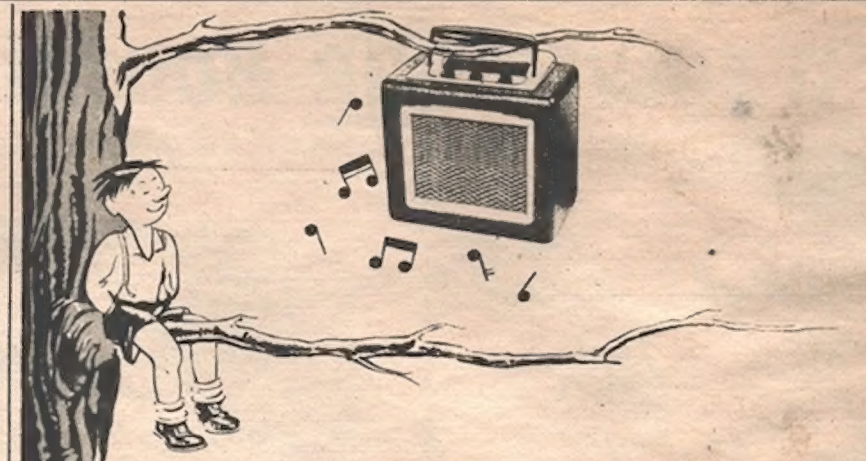

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BREWED AND BOTTLED BY WHITBREAD

The young man was suddenly silent. Then Miss Marple saw why. A very beautiful girl had jumped from the gleaming car and was coming towards them

Beginning a brilliant new "whodunit"—starring the famous Miss Marple

They do it with mirrors

by AGATHA CHRISTIE

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE DITTON

MRS. VAN RYDOCK MOVED a little back from the mirror and sighed. "Well, that'll have to do," she murmured. "Think it's all right, Jane?"

Miss Marple eyed the Lanvanelli creation appraisingly.

"It seems to me a very beautiful gown," she said.

"The gown's all right," said Mrs. Van Rydock, and sighed.

"Take it off, Stephanie," she said.

The elderly maid with the grey hair and the small, pinched mouth eased the gown carefully up over Mrs. Van Rydock's upstretched arms.

Mrs. Van Rydock stood in front of the glass in her peach satin slip. She was exquisitely corseted. Her still shapely legs were encased in fine nylon stockings. Her face, beneath a layer of cosmetics and constantly toned up by massage, appeared almost girlish at a slight distance. Her hair was less grey than tending to hydrangea blue and was perfectly set. It was practically impossible, when looking at Mrs. Van Rydock, to imagine what she would be like in a natural state. Everything that money could do had been done for her—reinforced by diet, massage and constant exercises.

Ruth Van Rydock looked humorously at her friend.

"Jane, do you think most people would guess that you and I are practically the same age?"

Miss Marple responded loyally.

"Not for a moment, I'm sure," she said reassuringly. "I'm afraid, you know, that *I* look every minute of *my* age."

Miss Marple was white-haired, with a soft, pink-and-white wrinkled face and innocent, china-blue eyes. She looked a very sweet old lady. Nobody would have called Mrs. Van Rydock a sweet old lady.

"I guess you do, Jane," said Mrs. Van Rydock. She grinned suddenly. "And so do I. Only not in the same way. 'Wonderful how that old hag keeps her figure.' That's what

they say of me. But they know I'm an old hag all right! And, my God, do I feel like one!"

She dropped heavily on to the satin-quilted chair.

"That's all right, Stephanie," she said. "You can go."

Stephanie gathered up the dress and went out.

"Good old Stephanie," said Ruth Van Rydock. "She's been with me for over thirty years now. She's the only woman who knows what I really look like! Jane, I want to talk to you."

Miss Marple leaned forward a little. Her face took on a receptive expression. She looked, somehow, an incongruous figure in the ornate bedroom of the expensive hotel suite. She was dressed in rather dowdy black, and carried a large shopping bag.

"I'm worried, Jane. About Carrie Louise."

"Carrie Louise?" Miss Marple repeated the name musingly. The sound of it took her a long way back.

The *pensionnat* in Florence. Herself, the pink-and-white English girl from a cathedral close. The two Martin girls, Americans, exciting to the English girl because of their quaint ways of speech and their forthright manner and vitality. Ruth, tall, eager, on top of the world; Carrie Louise, small, dainty, wistful.

"When did you see her last, Jane?"

"Oh! Not for many, many years. It must be twenty-five at least. Of course, we still send cards at Christmas."

Such an odd thing, friendship! She, young Jane Marple, and the two Americans. Their ways diverging almost at once, and yet the old affection persisting; occasional letters, remembrances at Christmas. And yet it was Ruth, who lived in America, whom she saw most often, and Carrie Louise, who lived in England, whom she saw hardly at all.

"Why are you worried about Carrie Louise, Ruth?" asked Miss Marple.

RUTH VAN RYDOCK did not directly answer the question. She said: "Carrie Louise was always the one of us who had ideals. Of course, it was the fashion when we were young to have ideals—we all had them, it was the proper thing for young girls. You were going to nurse lepers, Jane, and I was going to be a nun. One gets over all that nonsense. But Carrie Louise, you know. . . ." Her face darkened. "I think that's what worries me about Carrie Louise. Three times she's married cranks."

"Well, dear——" began Miss Marple.

"I know, I know," said Ruth Van Rydock, impatiently. "Gulbrandsen, her first husband, certainly wasn't an impractical crank. Married her when he was fifty and with a grown-up family, and made a fortune."

Miss Marple nodded thoughtfully. The name of Gulbrandsen had an international significance. A man who, with shrewd business acumen and perfect honesty, had built up a fortune so colossal that, really, philanthropy had been the only solution to the disposal of it. The name still held significance. The Gulbrandsen Trust, the Gulbrandsen Research Fellowships, the Gulbrandsen Administrative Almshouses, and, best known of all, the vast educational college for the sons of working men.

"I was really happiest about Carrie Louise when she married Johnnie Restarick after Gulbrandsen died, though I never took that scene designing and theatrical stuff of his seriously. Of course, he married her for her money—or if not exactly that, at any rate he wouldn't have married her if she hadn't had any. And then that dreadful Jugoslavian woman got hold of him and just swept him off with her. He didn't really want to go. If Carrie Louise had waited and been sensible, he would have come back to her."

"Did she care very much?" asked Miss Marple.

"That's the funny thing. I don't really believe she did. She was absolutely sweet about it all—but then she would be. She *is* sweet. Quite anxious to divorce him so that he and that creature could get married. And offering to give those two boys of his by his first marriage a home with her because it would be more settled for them. So there poor Johnnie was—he *had* to marry the woman and she led him an awful six months and then drove him over a precipice in a car in a fit of rage. They *said* it was an accident, but *I* think it was just temper!"

Mrs. Van Rydock paused, took up a mirror and gazed at her face searchingly. She picked up her eyebrow tweezers and pulled out a hair.

"And what does Carrie Louise do next but marry this man, Lewis Serrocold. Another crank! Another man with ideals! Oh, I don't say he isn't devoted to her—I think he is—but he's bitten by that same bug of wanting to improve everybody's lives for them. And really, you know, nobody can do that but yourself."

"I wonder," said Miss Marple.

"Juvenile delinquency—that's his pet subject. The whole place has been turned over to this new idea. It's a training establishment now for these juvenile criminals, complete with psychiatrists and psychologists and all the rest of it. There Lewis and Carrie Louise are, surrounded by these boys—who aren't perhaps quite normal. And the place stiff with occupational therapists and teachers and enthusiasts, half of *them* quite mad. Cranks, all the lot of them, and my little Carrie Louise in the middle of it all!"

She paused—and stared helplessly at Miss Marple.

Miss Marple said in a faintly puzzled voice: "But you haven't told me yet, Ruth, what you are really afraid of."

"I tell you, I don't *know*! And *that's* what worries me. I've just been down there—for a flying visit. And I felt all along that there was something wrong. In the atmosphere—in the house—I know I'm not mistaken. I'm sensitive to atmosphere, always have been." She stopped, and then said impulsively: "Jane, I want you to go down there right away and find out just exactly what's the matter."

"*Me?*" exclaimed Miss Marple. "Why me?"

"Because you've got a nose for that sort of thing. You always had. You've always been a sweet, innocent-looking creature, Jane, and all the time underneath nothing has ever surprised you, you always believe the worst."

"But Ruth, dear," said Miss Marple equably, "how can I simply go down there . . . ?"

"I've thought it all out. If you won't be absolutely mad at me, I've prepared the ground already. I wrote to Carrie Louise about you. As I expected, she's inviting you down. The letter should be awaiting you now."

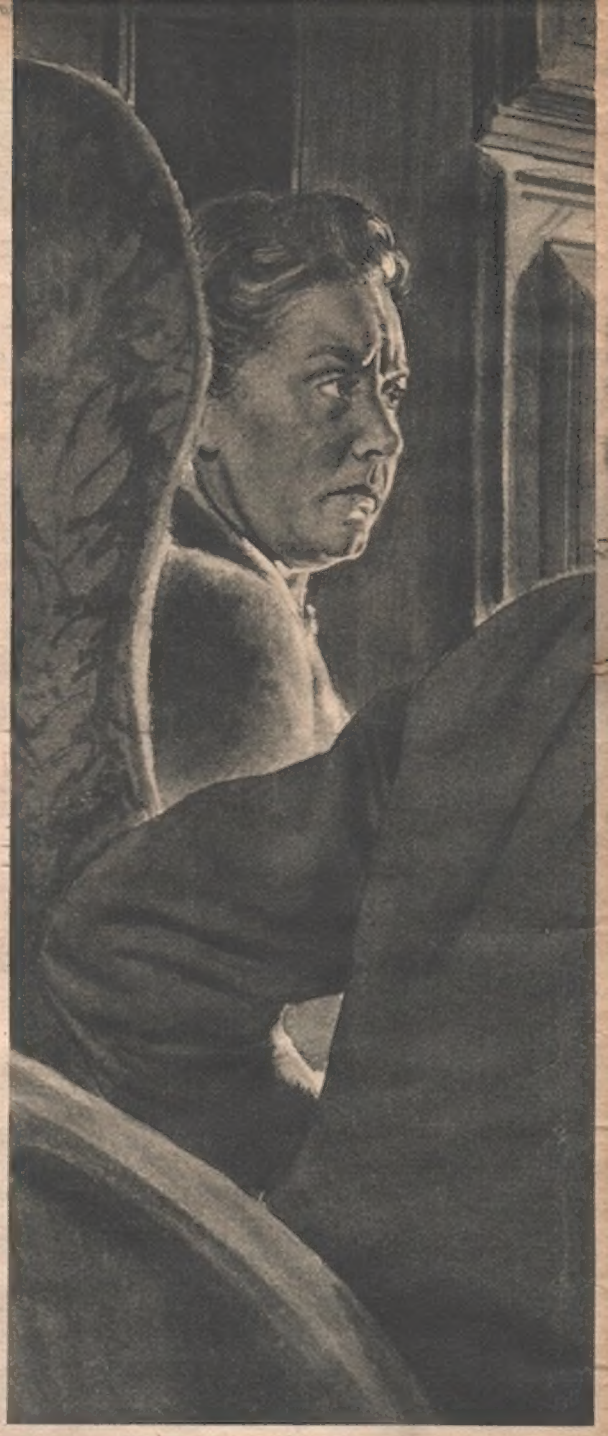
BEFORE catching her train back to St. Mary Mead, Miss Marple, in a precise and business-like fashion, collected certain data.

"It's just the facts I should like, Ruth dear—and also some idea as to whom exactly I shall encounter at Stonygates."

"Well, you know about Carrie Louise's marriage to Gulbrandsen. There were no children and Carrie Louise took that very much to heart. Gulbrandsen was a widower, and had three grown-up sons. Eventually they adopted a child. Pippa, they called her—a lovely little creature. She was just two years old when they got her."

"Where did she come from? What was her background?"

"Really, now, Jane, I can't remember—if I ever heard, that is. An adoption society, maybe, or some unwanted child that Gulbrandsen had heard about. Anyway, the next thing that happened was that Carrie Louise found that she was going to have a baby after all. I understand from doctors that that quite often happens. Earlier, of course, she'd have been wild with joy. As it was, she'd given such a devoted love to Pippa that she felt quite apologetic to Pippa for putting her nose out



of joint, so to speak. And then Mildred, when she arrived, was really a very unattractive child. Took after the Gulbrandsens, who were solid and worthy, but definitely homely. Carrie Louise was always so anxious to make no difference between the adopted child and her own child that I think she rather tended to over-indulge Pippa and pass over Mildred. Sometimes I think that Mildred resented it. However, I didn't see them often. Pippa grew up a very beautiful girl and Mildred grew up a plain one. Eric Gulbrandsen died when Mildred was fifteen and Pippa eighteen. Gulbrandsen left an equal sum in trust for both his own and his adopted daughter. Pippa later married an Italian marchese, and Mildred married a Canon Strete—a nice man but given to colds in the head. About ten or fifteen years older than she was. Quite a happy marriage, I believe.

"He died a year ago and Mildred has come back to Stonygates to live with her mother. But that's getting on too fast. I've skipped a marriage or two. I'll go back to them. Pippa married her Italian, and a year later had a daughter, Gina, and died in childbirth. It was a terrible tragedy and everyone was very cut up. Carrie Louise went to and fro between Italy and England a good deal, and it was in Rome that she met Johnnie Restarick and married him. The marchese married again and he was quite willing for his little daughter to be brought up in England by her exceedingly wealthy grandmother. So they all settled down at Stonygates, Johnnie Restarick and Carrie Louise, and Johnnie's two boys, Alexis and Stephen, and

Edgar Lawson came bursting into the room. He pointed an accusing finger at Lewis Serrocold. "It's no use—I've found you out!" he shouted

the baby, Gina. Mildred married her canon soon afterwards. Then came all this business of Johnnie and the Jugoslavian woman and the divorce. The boys still came to Stonygates for their holidays and were devoted to Carrie Louise and then, in 1938 I think it was, Carrie Louise married Lewis."

Mrs. Van Rydock paused for breath. "You've not met Lewis?"

Miss Marple shook her head. "No, I think I last saw Carrie Louise in 1928. She very sweetly took me to Covent Garden—to the Opera."

"Oh yes. Well, Lewis was a very suitable person for her to marry. He was the head of a very celebrated firm of chartered accountants. He was well off, just about her own age, and a man of absolutely upright life. But he *was* a crank. He was absolutely rabid on the subject of the redemption of young criminals."

Ruth van Rydock sighed, seeing Miss Marple glancing at her watch. "And now you've got to catch your train, and I'm not half done. But I expect you will find out for yourself."

Miss Marple nodded. "I expect I will," she said.

MARKET KINDLE was a large, empty, wind-swept station with hardly any passengers or railway staff to be seen on it. Its claim to distinction lay in having six platforms and a bay where a very small train of one carriage was puffing importantly.

Miss Marple was peering around her uncertainly when a young man came up to her.

"Miss Marple?" he said. His voice had an unexpectedly dramatic quality about it, as though the utterance of her name were the first words of a part he was playing in amateur theatricals. "I've come to meet you—from Stonygates."

Miss Marple looked gratefully at him, a charming, helpless-looking old lady with, if he had chanced to notice it, very shrewd blue eyes. The personality of the young man did not quite match his voice. It was less important, one might almost say insignificant. His eyelids had a trick of fluttering nervously.

"Oh, thank you," said Miss Marple. "There's just this suitcase."

She noticed that the young man did not pick up her suitcase himself. He flipped a finger at a porter who was trundling some packing cases past on a trolley.

"Bring it out, please," he said, and added importantly: "For Stonygates."

The porter said cheerfully: "Rightyho. Shan't be long."

Miss Marple fancied that her new acquaintance was not too pleased about this. It was as if Buckingham Palace had been dismissed as no more important than 3 Laburnum Road.

"The railways get more impossible every day!" declared the young man.

Guiding Miss Marple towards the exit, he said: "I'm Edgar Lawson. Mrs. Serrocold asked me to meet you. I help Mr. Serrocold in his work."

There was again the faint insinuation that a busy and important man had, very charmingly, put important affairs on one side out of chivalry to his employer's wife. And again the impression was not wholly convincing—it had a theatrical flavour.

Miss Marple began to wonder about Edgar Lawson.

They came out of the station and Edgar guided the old lady to where a rather elderly Ford V8 was standing.

He was just saying: "Will you come in front with me, or would you prefer the back?" when there was a diversion.

A gleaming new Rolls-Bentley came purring into the station yard and drew up in front of the Ford. A very beautiful young woman jumped out of it and came across to them. The fact that she wore dirty corduroy slacks and a simple Aertex shirt open at the neck seemed somehow to enhance the fact that she was not only beautiful but expensive.

"There you are, Edgar. I thought I wouldn't make it in time. I see you've got Miss Marple. I came to meet her." She smiled dazzlingly at Miss Marple, showing a row of lovely teeth in a sunburnt, southern face. "I'm Gina," she said. "Carrie Louise's grand-daughter. What was your journey like? Simply foul? What a nice string bag! I *love* string bags. I'll take it and the coats and then you can get in better."

Edgar's face flushed. He protested.

"Look here, Gina, I came to meet Miss Marple. It was all arranged. . . ."

Again the teeth flashed in that wide, lazy smile.

"Oh, I know, Edgar, but I suddenly thought it would be nice if I came along. I'll take

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Gate-crashing the film world on £200

THE MIGHTY BALCON

The remarkable story of Sir Michael Balcon, go-getter with the mild manner, whose astonishing career traces the ups and downs of British film-making. . . . Second of four fascinating articles

by

LAWRENCE EARL

The Balcons in their lovely Sussex home. His shy, nervous manner won her heart, she says

FEW BRITONS IN THE PAST thirty years can have had such skyrocketing ups and such meteoric downs as Sir Michael Balcon in pursuing his chosen career as a film producer. In 1920, when he first began to think of making a living out of the movies, Balcon was, according to a friend of that period, "frightfully thin, with a black moustache, a mass of black hair and extraordinarily white teeth. He was a highly nervous creature who never sat in a chair for more than a few seconds at a time. I can't remember ever seeing him walking: he always half ran." Obviously, the young man was in a hurry.

When Sol Levy, a Birmingham showman, offered him a job selling to the exhibitors of the area such early D. W. Griffiths pictures as *Intolerance* and *Birth of a Nation*, Mick—as he was, and is, called by his colleagues—quickly accepted. "I soon found that I wasn't the salesman type," he confessed later. That was his first failure in films, but, like all the others, it could not discourage him. Instead, with a school chum named Victor Saville, and £200 between them, he decided to try his luck in London. The pair set up a company in Cranbourne Mansions, opposite the Hippodrome Theatre. "All we had was the rent money, and the whole wide future before us," he reminisced recently. "Our idea was to persuade theatres to play advertising films." He and Saville actually did produce half a dozen of these advertising shorts, all out of doors: they couldn't afford to pay the rent for studios.

His First Big Chance

At this time, the British film industry was going through one of its early crises. Graham Cutts, a film director Balcon had met in Birmingham, had just broken away from Herbert Wilcox, his producer (now internationally known for the films he has made starring his wife, Anna Neagle). One day, Cutts walked into Balcon's office.

"I have the rights of a big stage success named *Woman to Woman*," Cutts announced. "How would you like to make a film of it with me?" He made it clear that he was counting on the young partners to provide funds for the venture. This was just the chance Mick had been waiting for, and he said so. He dropped his other work and went looking for financial backing. He was able to talk the late Charles M. Woolf into giving them a distribution advance of £7,000—an unheard of sum to gamble on unknowns. "Woolf was so ashamed of his generosity," a friend of Balcon's reported, "that the transaction was somewhat furtively carried out in a Soho café." From

Oscar Deutsch, then a Birmingham metal merchant, and others, Balcon borrowed the rest of the £40,000 kitty the film needed. "God knows where we found the colossal gall," Balcon muses with a certain nostalgic admiration, when talking about this phase of his past.

In a bid for international—and particularly American — distribution, Balcon and Saville decided to import from Hollywood a well-known star for the feminine lead of the film. Saville sailed to America and there settled on Betty Compson, a celebrated blonde of the early 'twenties. Unfortunately, as it later developed, Miss Compson would not come to England to make only one film. "I'll come for two, however," she added, and Saville signed her at £1,000 a week—a huge salary for the young beginners to guarantee. Clive Brook, on the rise as a stage actor, was given the top male rôle, and a tough-looking young professional boxer had his skin stained to play the tiny bit part of a Nubian slave. His name was Victor McLaglen. To the joy of the partners, when *Woman to Woman* was completed it was, as Balcon puts it, "a fantastic fluke success." Considering the partners' lack of experience, this was roughly comparable to their finding the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. The film made a profit of £30,000.

However, because of the crippling two-picture clause in the Compson contract, Balcon and Saville rushed into their second film too quickly. There was no fluke about this one, and it was just as smashing a failure as the first had been a success. "I've had plenty of flops since," Balcon summed up a month or two ago, "but that was the daddy of them all." It gobbled up the profits earned by *Woman to Woman* and wiped out the partnership. Balcon had been carried to the crest of the wave on his first film and swept into the abyss on his second; but even out of the latter he managed to make a profit, although not a financial one. He learned a basic truth about film making: no picture should be hurried into production without careful preparation. He has never forgotten it.

He Proposed By Post

It was during the making of his initial success that Mick met Aileen Leatherman, a radiant young woman with burnished blonde hair, who was spending a school holiday with an aunt in Maidenhead. Balcon, who shared a neighbouring house with three bachelor friends, was introduced to her at a riverside dance. At the time, Aileen had an "understanding" with a man in South Africa who was considerably older than she was. If she thought of Balcon at all, she thought of him only as a dark and rather nervous youth on the periphery of her circle of acquaintances.

It was probably just as well, for Miss Leatherman's brother had become friends with the young producer and soon made it clear to her that she was only a girl and should act accordingly. "For God's sake, Aileen," he told her more than once, "keep out of the way when Mickey comes. He doesn't want to be bothered by you."

Balcon was shy, but when Aileen went back to South Africa, where her parents lived, he soon proved how far wrong her brother's assumption had been. Mustering his courage, he proposed by post. There was no connection between this letter and the subsequent breaking of Miss Leatherman's engagement to her South African suitor, but soon afterwards her parents sent her back to Britain. Mick was delighted. Eagerly he called round to see her, but they had hardly exchanged greetings before becoming involved in a violent quarrel. Aileen refused to speak to him for some months on this account. At about this time, Balcon was having his difficulties over that unfortunate second film. He was now a thoroughly miserable young man, but still in a hurry.

He and Cutts decided at this point to start all over again. They were broke, but that did not stop them from forming themselves into a company. They called it Gainsborough Pictures, a name which was later to shine on the screens of the world. At the same time, realizing that their recent fiasco had ruined their chances of raising capital for independent filming, they nervously approached Colonel A. C. Bromhead and his brother Reginald, who controlled the Gaumont company.

For a man who claimed that he had no talent as a salesman, and who was undoubtedly shy by nature, Balcon managed to do very well with the Bromheads. "We've had some film experience," he told them, and stressed the story of their success with *Woman to Woman*. By the time he had finished talking, the Bromheads had agreed to finance Balcon in a film he was to make for Gaumont.

A Triumph For Shyness

It was then that Balcon heard of Aileen Leatherman's impending return to South Africa. He hurried round to say goodbye and, before the evening slipped away, found the courage to propose again. To his surprise and great pleasure, this time the answer was yes. "I'd been to school in Paris," Aileen said some years later in reference to the occasion, "and Mickey's shy, nervous manner was *so* different from the suave confidence of the men I'd met." Again Balcon's graph was climbing skyward.

With considerable gusto, he and Cutts went to work on their new picture. During the week of its première, Mick and Aileen were married. It was pure coincidence that the film's title was *The Passionate Adventure*, but even today Lady Balcon pulls Sir Michael's leg about it. The picture was a reasonable success, with Clive Brook again playing the male lead and with Victor McLaglen promoted by Balcon from bit player to villain. Soon both Brook and McLaglen were to hit the heights of Hollywood and the fabulous salaries that accompanied such glory. By giving them their leg up, Mick really sent them there.

Although Balcon had talked the Bromheads into giving Cutts and himself the backing for *The Passionate Adventure*, the two older men were cautious when it came to business. "We must wait until we get our money back before we give you any more work," they told him. In those early days, block bookings often kept a film from general distribution for up to eighteen months, and the future for newly wed Mick Balcon looked both idle and unprofitable. He was too highly strung to stand idleness and too nearly insolvent to wait until the Bromheads called for his services again. He scraped together a few pounds, donned his tails, and went to Ciro's for a night out—"on the principle," as he said later, "that you had to be seen about if you wanted work."

Lucky Break—In Germany

The hunch was a good one. At Ciro's he was given a table next to another occupied by his old backer, Charles M. Woolf, and Erich Pommer, who had been chosen to rehabilitate the German film industry after the first World War. Woolf called Mick over. "Pommer and I have been talking about doing Anglo-German productions," he said. "Why don't you go to Germany with him? If you do, I'll put money into the proposition."

The offer was heaven-sent for Balcon. In Berlin, he made *The Blackguard*. "It was not a world-beater," he has since admitted. "I had a lot to learn, and, besides, the picture had been jointly produced with Pommer. That meant we both had to compromise all along the line, which, in making films, is not a good thing." Through the years, this feeling of independence has been Balcon's great strength, although there were times when, to others, it must have seemed a weakness.

At any rate, he returned to England to make films whenever he could find someone to put up the money. His wife recalls that in this period

Betty Compson. Her first film for Balcon was a fantastic fluke success. Her second ruined him

One of Balcon's greatest friends: Ivor Novello, with Mabel Poulton in *The Constant Nymph*

Betty Balfour, idol of the twenties. Balcon met her in the then famous stars' club, the Fifty-Fifty

The people around Balcon during his early days in films. Left to right: Erich Pommer, Jack Hulbert, Victor Saville, Balcon and Cicely Courtneidge

of alternating success and failure, Balcon would sink from moods of exultant optimism to the deepest of depressions, and vice versa. "If this goes on much longer," he once moaned, "we'll be starving before long." The next week he went out and bought a car. No wonder Aileen found it difficult to keep track of their fortunes.

The young couple moved around a great deal in theatrical circles in those days. Ivor Novello ran a little club, the Fifty-Fifty in Wardour Street, to which they belonged. The club had a membership largely composed of enthusiastic young film and stage people, including Isabel Jeans, Betty Balfour, Jack Hulbert and Cicely Courtneidge. Balcon became friendly with Ivor Novello—a friendship which endured until the latter's death—and before long they were planning to make a film starring Novello and produced by Mick.

It was during this period that Balcon formed another friendship, which later was to develop into one of the important associations in the British film industry. Realizing that he was no expert in accountancy, Mick contracted with a company to keep his book-keeping straight. At first, it was the head of this firm, a clever but inflexible accountant named Joseph Berger, who attended to these matters.

Pair Clicked At Once

Balcon admired Berger's ability, but felt that he did not understand that film production could not be measured by the ordinary buy-and-sell rules of business. Then, one day, Berger sent his younger partner along to take his place. The partner was a slender and erect former cavalry officer. Balcon has good cause to remember the day he knocked at the door.

"Joe had to go away," the new man explained, "and I've come to act for him. My name is Baker—Reg Baker." The pair clicked at once. When Balcon heard that the American film company, Famous Players, wanted to dispose of their British studios—a converted power house in Islington—he decided that the set-up was just what he wanted for himself, and asked Baker to go with him to see J. C. Graham, the British managing director for Famous Players. Baker agreed, and it was he who swung a deal which has probably not been equalled even in the never-never land of films. It happened like this.

"I hear you are thinking of selling out," Baker said by way of an opening gambit, while Balcon clenched and unclenched his hands in the background. "How much do you want for the lot?" He tried to sound casual.

Graham shrugged. "It's worth £100,000."

There was no doubt that this figure was a fair one, and Baker nodded gravely.

"Will you take an offer?" he asked.

"I might."

"Well—how about £14,000?"

Balcon held his breath while Graham drummed his fingers on the desk. "I'm going to surprise you," said Graham, with a sudden grin. "I'll take it."

Anti-climactically, Baker had to admit at this juncture that he and Balcon had nothing like this sum on hand; but he succeeded, incredibly, in convincing Graham that the latter should sell on hire-purchase at £3,500 a year. Balcon had never dreamed that such bargaining was possible. To tell the truth, neither had Baker.

End of a dream. Balcon's Islington studios after fire had gutted them

Trouble With Mae Marsh

At last, late in 1925, Balcon began to make films in his own studios. His first picture there was an adaptation of Ivor Novello's play, *The Rat*, with Novello in the male lead. But even in this moment of triumph, Balcon was faced with a disaster. Still pursuing the policy of hiring high-priced American stars to woo exhibitors in the United States into buying, he brought Mae Marsh across the Atlantic to play opposite Novello. "When she arrived, she was very ill," Balcon explained delicately when talking over old times recently. The blunt fact is that Miss Marsh, who had married some time before, was in the early stages of pregnancy, which seemed to affect her health unduly. With the film already begun and costs mounting daily, Balcon appeared to be caught in a trap, and for a while he did not know which way to turn. Eventually, the problem was solved by providing Miss Marsh with nurses and what amounted to hospital facilities on the set. The picture was triumphantly completed. Then something occurred which made it seem that Mick's attempts to gain the interest of American buyers was a winning one.

In 1926, Sam Eckman arrived in London from the United States to take over Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer interests in Britain; almost at once, he sought out Balcon, who by then was already planning to make more Novello pictures. It was clear to him that Ivor was just what the cinema box office needed.

Eckman said: "If you'll sell my company the entire Novello output, I will pay all your production costs. In addition, I will give

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SURVIVAL after Death

What my three-year search has proved to me

by REGINALD M. LESTER

"DON'T BE IMPATIENT. THERE is much in store for you yet." So the medium's hand—"controlled," as I now believed, most of the time by my wife's—had written at the close of the last automatic writing séance I attended. I was soon to receive proof of this in the next stage of my investigations. Quite unexpectedly I was shown how much I had still to learn.

It came about in this way. Marjorie had passed away or "passed over," at Christmas. The middle of July brought two important anniversaries in the same week—our wedding day and Marjorie's birthday. In view of this, I was anxious to arrange a sitting.

I was able to fix up a meeting with Helen Standing, who had given me such remarkable results through the method of automatic writing.

We began with an ordinary sitting. As before, the medium sat with a large sheet of paper in front of her, holding a pencil lightly in her right hand, just touching the paper. Soon, the pencil began to move, and the writing went on at a surprising speed, as on previous occasions.

Then the pencil suddenly wrote these words: "Now I want you to stop writing, please. I want to make closer contact with you. At least we are going to try it. We may not succeed."

"What do you wish us to do?" I asked.

The written reply was: "I want to try to speak to you in Helen. Please both of you go and sit quietly in armchairs. Stop writing."

We put the script and pencil away, as we were told, and sat down in chairs facing one another. I was under the impression that I was going to receive a spoken message through Mrs. Standing, just as I had done through other mediums gifted in the method of "direct talk."

A Ripple Of Laughter

But as I sat there, Mrs. Standing suddenly fell into deep trance, breathing very heavily. Then she sat upright, gave a little ripple of laughter and, leaning forward, gripped my hands in a way characteristic of my wife. She spoke excitedly: "But this is wonderful. Wonderful! It's Marjorie. I can feel again. I can feel you, Reg. I can even feel the arms of the chair I'm sitting in."

I said: "But just a minute, dear. I'm not quite clear about this. Surely you've been able to feel me when you've talked to me direct through the other mediums. How is this different?"

The reply was: "No, I haven't. This is quite different. I'm not talking *through* this medium. I'm inside her! It's a wonderful privilege, not often permitted. I'm allowed to use her physical body temporarily. I'm able to feel all the physical sensations again. I was just standing here, after I'd finished the writing, and then they said I could get into this medium's body and talk to you *inside* her. I was standing up and she was sitting down and they told me: 'Sit down,' and there I was all at once, quite natural, inside her like this."

A most convincing talk followed. Altogether, this remarkable contact lasted a quarter of an hour.

SUMMING up his personal investigation, Lester declares: "The evidence I have collected has caused me to reverse my earlier antagonism to the theory of spirit communication. . . . I am now quite convinced that communication is one of the great essential truths."

The author

"I Can Hear The Traffic"

A fortnight later, I had my first experience of "direct control" in my own home. I sat on our lounge settee, where I had sat so often with Marjorie herself. Helen Standing, the medium, was on my right. She fell into a trance, and presently her voice said excitedly: "I can hear the traffic! I can hear the traffic, just like I used to do. It's Marjorie."

Again, we talked quite normally about personal matters unknown to the medium. The conversation was carried on exactly as though my wife was indeed paying me a visit from the "other side"; everything was so natural and convincing.

Unusual and impressive as this phenomenon was, however, I could not say, when I came to analyse it afterwards, that "direct control" provides as much evidence as is obtainable by the method of the direct voice.

In summing up my experiences, I was always careful to rule out, or at any rate minimize, the value of evidential material (that is, information received at séances tending to provide proof of survival) unless it was absolutely clear that this knowledge could not have come from any earthly source, such as one's own subconscious mind. Consequently, I attached special value to matters noted down at various sittings which only proved to be correct when something happened later on—something I had not even known about at the time.

Here is an example of such an experience.

In the summer of 1949, I had succeeded in establishing my own home "circle," with a number of friends, and we were having tea in my flat one evening, after our weekly sitting, when one of our members (who is a good clairvoyant) said she could see a strange woman, not one of the company, walking across the room. She described this person in detail, but I could not place her at all, and was very puzzled.

I forgot all about the matter until it was referred to some months later during one of my "talks" with my wife through a medium. I then remembered the incident and asked who the strange visitor was. The reply came: "It was Maud." I protested that I neither knew, nor ever had known, anyone of that name. I was told that I would soon be meeting her husband and would have a lot to do with him.

Some weeks later, a personal call came through for me on the telephone at my office. The caller said I would not know his name, but he would like to meet me, as he was in a similar position to myself, having recently lost his wife.

On a sudden inspiration, I asked his wife's name, and he replied: "Maud." Later, he joined my home "circle," and we became close friends.

To Rule Out Telepathy

An equally remarkable example occurred when I found out that a home "circle" in Durham, conducted by a woman then quite unknown to me, had been visited by a stranger in spirit form whose name and identity they were unable to recognize. It turned out that the name was Marjorie and that her description—as noted by them at the time—was exactly like my wife's. I was told at a later sitting that this was done deliberately from the "other side" to give me additional evidence that would rule out telepathy.

Meantime, I had heard first-hand reports from reliable and clear-thinking friends of the astonishing results obtained by materialization.

I ought to explain that materialization is almost exactly what the word means—the reproduction of the actual shape and appearance of someone who has lived on this earth, and is brought back, or "materialized," by a medium. It is said to be done through the use of plasma from the medium's own body.

I had heard that at some advanced home "circles," as well as in science laboratories, people who had passed over had thus reappeared

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How stammerers become smooth talkers

by DENNIS HOLMAN

The inarticulate beginners at the back of Classroom Ten have one ambition: to join the fluent speakers on the dais of honour

EVENING CLASSES at Goldsmiths' College in the University of London are about to begin as Haydn Valentine Hemery, lecturer in speech disability, enters Room Ten, and about fifty adult students rise to their feet. Hemery is a youthful fifty-seven, with the voice and bearing of an actor of the old school. "Carry on, please," he tells the class as he goes to a side table; the dais is occupied by a chairman and what appears to be a committee, and a curious sort of discussion is in progress.

A young man steps up to the lectern with a sheet of paper from which he attempts to read a question; but he sticks on the second word, and stands there with his jaw trembling and his throat strung out tautly. He is trying to speak with all his strength.

"He's speechless because he's trying to say something and stifle it at the same time," Hemery whispers. "As he starts to speak, the feel of his speech muscles indicates to him that the sounds he will emit are not those he intends. Instinctively he stifles them, tries again, stifles those, too—and so on. All the while his anxiety and emotion are intensifying the ordeal." The student chairman on the dais is looking at his watch, and has lifted his gavel.

"The trouble is that this stammerer does not know how to use his speech machine properly, and is therefore suffering from the natural penalty for his errors," Hemery adds, glancing at his watch. "That will do—he's had enough," he tells the chairman, and the gavel descends.

The question which had proved such a hurdle is then read to the class meeting by the chairman: "Why do stammerers often think they speak better alone than in company?" One of the advanced students on the dais, John Medworth, a thirty-seven year old teacher of woodcraft, stands up to give the answer.

"Stammerers merely imagine they speak well when alone, as bath-tub baritones imagine they sing better in the bathroom," he says, enunciating each word clearly. "Soon after a stammerer first begins his speech re-education, his speaking usually seems to him to be getting worse. That is because he has become more conscious of his speech when it goes wrong, and more critical of himself. But this phase soon passes." John Medworth is speaking from experience; he had stammered for as long as he can remember. He liked his teaching job, but had never been able to conquer the embarrassment of trying to control schoolboys. His stammer-habit was progressive. It had reached a state in which he would stick on a word, and no amount of effort could get it out. It made him nervous, even terrified, of meeting people in case they should ask him the time or try to engage him in conversation. His health was affected and he always looked and felt tired. Now, after two years under Hemery's tuition at Goldsmiths', Medworth stands on the classroom dais and answers questions with complete assurance.

Standing in the easy attitude prescribed by Hemery (right), Alan Burn speaks fluently.

This is one of the class sessions devoted to testing progress, and the questions and answers are tabled on a scale suited to the stage of proficiency of each student. Only ten words are required of a bank clerk who, three months previously, had exhausted himself in an attempt to count aloud up to three. His question is answered volubly, if somewhat incoherently, by a gardener, standing erect with his feet apart. On his own admission the gardener once used to stammer with his head thrown back, his tongue stuck out, his body swaying from side to side, and one hand slapping his thigh.

Parents Asked To Help

Current medical opinion is that most speech defects, and certainly most stammers, are due to emotional conflicts which cause nervous tension. Bad speech habits begin in childhood and are best corrected then. Stammerers, lispers, clutterers and other dystatics, to use some of the medical terms for people who have speech trouble, are all treated medically by speech therapists. The approved treatment is that patients should be taught to speak slowly and to relax. Parents and teachers are asked to help instead of reprimanding them. There are special lip, tongue and mouth movements to be practised, and special breathing exercises.

The speech therapists alone may cure many of these cases. Others still have a basic emotional conflict which may have to be sorted out by a

After the class, students and teacher adjourn to the local pub, the Rosemary Branch. Hemery is sitting at the bar, with A. J. Smith on his right and Ernest Bazeley behind him

He is keen to become a teacher of the Hemery method of curing stammering

This student can now read bedtime stories to his two children. Yet, three years ago, he could not even talk to them. Since attending Hemery's classes, he has been made an assistant works manager

psychologist before the stammer can be resolved. Some cases do well under a mixture of hypnotism and psychology. But there always remains a hard core of intractable stammerers who do not respond to orthodox treatment. They get steadily worse, and really need something which is not orthodox; they need continuous contact with a powerful and understanding personality —in effect, a complete re-education in speaking. This is a long, tough, uphill job, but it is the kind of job Hemery likes doing.

Joined Foreign Legion

Speechlessness affects people differently. One of Hemery's best pupils is a man of forty-seven, who had stammered, with facial contortions and acute tightening of the chest muscles, from the age of eight. Curiously, he also had spells of comparative freedom from stammering, and it was during one of these spells that he joined the Foreign Legion. But he was not in the Legion for long before he regretted his impulse and wanted to get out. To do this he feigned dumbness, and kept it up for eight months, resisting every attempt to induce him to speak. Foreign Legion doctors tried everything; he was even starved, and then told he could have anything he wanted to eat—provided he just asked for it.

Finally discharged with a pension of about 2s. 6d. a week, he found on his return to Britain that he had really lost his power of speech. It took him years to get it back, but when he did speak again his stammer was worse than ever. "He was a pretty bad case, and in a sorry plight when he came to me three years ago, after seeing my students give a public demonstration of speaking proficiency," Hemery says. "He has made good progress, but still has room for improvement."

A seat on the dais during these sessions is a positive ambition for a pupil and, once achieved, it has to be maintained by hard work and diligence. Ernest Bazeley, a qualified engineer of forty-six, is one of the advanced pupils. He had stammered since he was four and had consulted a number of specialists in his time. He was a particularly bad case. As a young man he had first come face to face with the consequence of his disability when he began looking for a job; he found he usually did all right in a competitive examination—until he came before the interview board. Once, at a medical examination, the doctor took a rifle, fixed a bayonet and made a lunge at Bazeley's naked stomach, stopping just short of his navel. With the rifle held there, he then proceeded to fire questions at Bazeley, who was too terrified to reply.

That was the kind of shock treatment sometimes meted out to stammerers many years ago in the belief that their condition was due to "nerves" or some mental abnormality. Another of Hemery's pupils, a young man of twenty-two, who in his attempts to speak used to twist his head round like a pigeon's, roll his eyes and do a little dance, had been also treated for his stammering by a number of specialists. "I'm afraid their efforts seemed only to make me worse," the young man now says fluently.

"Lullaby" Suggestion

Even auto-suggestion has been tried as a cure for stammering, as Arthur Hanson, a civil servant of forty-two, and a lifelong stammerer, can testify. His odyssey through specialists' consulting rooms took him to Emile Coué himself, and Hanson was advised to lull himself to sleep saying, "Every day, in every way, I am getting better."

According to Hemery, a man cannot be made to speak correctly by offering him little tit-bits of advice in the name of psychology. He has his own rather unorthodox theories about stammering and its causes. Not surprisingly, he has little use for the orthodox theory, practice and results. The people who come to him are usually those stammerers who have not responded at all to conventional methods of treatment. Hemery blames the habit of misusing speech muscles for causing most people to stammer. Children acquire bad habits, usually by imitating another stammerer, consciously or unconsciously. Nervousness and anxiousness, Hemery maintains, are more often the result—not the cause—of stammering, though they tend to make the subject progressively worse.

Alan Burn, one of Hemery's assistant class instructors, a stammerer from the age of seven, was taken when he was twelve to a woman who told him to feel calm, think of green fields and try to speak phrases like "A cow by the cool pool." She gave him up as hopeless after three months.

Learning To Talk Anew

Hemery began by completely re-educating him in the mechanics of speaking. Burn was taken right back to the elementals of speech, and made to practise until he had trained his ear to link the sounds he produced with the feel of the muscles being correctly used to produce them. Then he was given simple combinations and, when he had mastered these, the longer and more difficult ones. Very gradually he was taken on to phrases and sentences, and then on to the mental task of marshalling his thoughts and using words to express them effectively.

It was hard work, but he had stammered for more than twenty years. An entirely new and better way of speaking had to replace the old, bad way, and that took some doing. To correct a deep-seated stammer, Hemery reckons that on an average it takes a year's hard work for every ten years that the pupil has stammered.

Haydn Hemery's interest in stammering dates back twenty years. He was born in London, the son of a singing teacher, and brought up against a background of voice training. Invalided out of the Forces in 1919, eighty per cent disabled, Hemery studied music and singing at the Royal College of Music, got his L.R.A.M., and went to South Africa to take up his first job as a singing teacher.

Back in Britain at the end of 1930, Hemery gave a series of lectures on voice for the London County Council and, as a result of the success of these lectures, he was invited to join the evening department of Goldsmiths' College at New Cross. When he returned after the war to

Continued on page 29

AGAINST THE MONSTER

by ***ROWAN AYERS***

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM LITTLE

All his life he had been afraid of fear—of the monster always at his back. Now, tonight, they were brought face to face. He could run away no longer

CAPTAIN ALEXANDER BRITTEN, D.S.O., D.S.C., R.N. (Retd.), drew a small circle on a piece of paper and neatly bisected it with a firm straight line.

"I should say the trouble with this man Fellowes," he said, surveying the rest of the committee as if they were captive U-boat commanders, "is that he lacks experience. We're not just looking for a good seaman," he added. "We want a thoroughly capable all-round man."

It might have been an extract from one of his introductory speeches to a young officer on joining his first ship; except that on those occasions, he had never doubted, as now, the existence of honest-to-goodness guts. Carslake, the secretary, should have known better than to bring the man's name forward. There was no room in the club for a yellow-blooded conscientious objector. Not while Alexander Britten was commodore. . . .

"Let's give him a try-out. Say a month or two, with some sort of option both ways," someone suggested.

The commodore leaned back in his chair and folded his arms. "I can't see," he declared pontifically, "how an arrangement like that's going to appeal either to—to this man, whatever his name is, or to the club."

"Fellowes," Carslake supplied. "Albert Fellowes." He looked down at the letter of application and regretted that he'd been forced to read it aloud. At the preliminary interview Fellowes had seemed pleasant and sincere, with the sort of self-effacing temperament that the job of boatman called for. The other part didn't really matter.

"If we don't take him on," said Carslake, a little impatiently, "we'll have to start sending out for applications all over again." This was the part of being an hon. sec. that he least enjoyed. Administration.

"There must be plenty of good ex-naval petty officers," said the commodore, still defiantly loyal, "who'd leap at the chance, and be a damned sight more capable. I could name half a dozen who served under me in the *Vulture*."

The committee was becoming restless. It had been a long and difficult meeting, and had settled nothing satisfactorily.

"Maybe," countered Carslake, aware of the general uneasiness. "But maybe they're not in a position to accept; even if we knew how to contact them. Whereas Fellowes. . . ."

"Good God, man," interrupted Captain Britten, who was unused to having his authority questioned. "I could get them through Admiralty, just by lifting the telephone—any time I wanted."

The vice-commodore, an ex-squadron leader, looked at his watch ostentatiously. "I suggest," he said, "we give this Fellowes chap a trial. If he doesn't fit in, it's easy enough to get shot of him. . . ."

The commodore considered the opposition building up against him. One damned ex-R.A.F. officer, a couple of stiff-necked pongoes, and a rat-faced little spiv who owned a chain of inferior cinemas, and who'd been something to do with N.A.A.F.I. There wasn't enough here to worry a chief bos'n's mate, let alone a flotilla captain with five submarines to his credit and a glorious action against a German cruiser that had supplied another chapter in naval history.

And yet they were asking him to approve the appointment of some snivelling out-of-work pacifist. . . .

For a moment he felt the authority of his position, and was prepared to exert it to its utmost. But even as he narrowed his eyes and drew his mouth into a thin, straight line, he hesitated. Beyond the secretary's head, through the large plate-glass windows of the clubhouse, he caught sight of his yacht, the *Tumbril*, riding peacefully at her moorings. There was something about her that gave him back a sense of proportion.

She was his only remaining command. A small, elegant five-tonner, without bridge, or quartermaster, or engine-room; without guns or torpedo tubes or depth charges; without even, he conceded sadly, the right to fly the White Ensign . . . but she was all he had.

"Very well, gentlemen," he said, drawing another line through the circle as if to mark indelibly the very spot in life where he had fallen from power. "I can see I shall be outvoted in this matter. I therefore have no alternative but to accept your recommendations. It is to be understood, of course, that the job is only seasonal and will terminate at the end of September."

"Yes, sir," Carslake said. "He quite appreciates that."

"Then if there's no other business, gentlemen, I think we'll call the meeting closed."

There was a pause, a silent, embarrassing pause, and then it was all over. As the committee filed out of the saloon into the warm air of late spring, Carslake felt he had been an unwilling witness at some solemn act of sacrifice.

It was a good season. The racing fleet of eighteen-footers had been increased during the winter months from eleven to fifteen. The membership was at its highest since the war, and there were a number of general improvements, including, most people considered, the acquisition of Albert Fellowes.

He had settled down easily and unobtrusively into the general routine, and performed his duties both cheerfully and efficiently. His hard, nut-brown face, and soft, pale eyes had become already as much an established property of the club as the flagstaff or the weatherbeaten club dinghy.

But all this was in spite of Captain Britten, almost in defiance of him. In his treatment of Fellowes, he was at all times unreasonable and unsparing. To him the man was, and always would be, an outcast, a disgrace to king and country, and fully deserving of the bullying attitude he found himself so easily adopting.

"Fellowes!" he would shout, when he knew the man was busily engaged on some other job. "I want to see you a minute."

Fellowes always obeyed, instantly.

"I noticed yesterday the runners on the main track were jamming. Have you been greasing them like I told you to?"

"Yes, sir. I was out there two days ago."

"Did you go to the top of the mast?"

Fellowes licked his lips. "No, sir," he said. "I didn't think it'd need any above the spreaders. There's never much drag on the upper part——"

"That's just where it's jamming," insisted the commodore irritably. "See that something's done, will you? Right away. Unless"—he paused and looked the man defiantly in the face—"unless, of course, you're afraid of heights."

Fellowes clenched his teeth but said nothing. And even as he walked away, the commodore turned to Carslake, who had witnessed the scene, and added in a plainly audible voice, "The trouble with that fellow is that he hasn't any guts."

Fellowes stopped, half-turned, and then, to everyone's surprise and relief, continued on his way into the locker-room. It was not, thought Carslake, seeing the look of satisfaction in the commodore's eyes, a particularly creditable victory.

TOWARDS the middle of September, the season broke up in a succession of driving gales. Already some of the smaller yachts had moved to their winter quarters, and most of the talk was concerned with plans for laying-up.

"I think we'll have *Tumbril* out of it next week," the commodore told Fellowes. "We're not going to get much more sailing this year. And once we start getting the nor-easters. . . ."

Fellowes knew that with the departure of the *Tumbril* his own days at the club would be numbered. In some strange way, he had come to identify himself with that spotless, elegant five-tonner. Both their lives seemed to conform to a similar pattern, to obey similar rules, a similar master, even.

"What'll you do when you leave here?" asked Carslake one evening, as he stood looking at the angry sea coming in with the flood.

"I haven't worked it out yet, Mr. Carslake," said Fellowes, and added, to save any embarrassment, "but I never worry. Not till it happens."

"You'll be back next year? In the club, I mean?"

Fellowes looked at him uncertainly. "I don't know, sir," he said simply, "I couldn't say. A lot depends on—on—well, on a lot, if you get my meaning."

Carslake knew what he meant and looked

Ignoring the shouting voice behind the lamp, he hurled himself against the biting wind and spray, fighting his way forward to the water's edge

away. At the small coastguard station about a mile up the coast, an ominous black cone had been hoisted, a north cone, warning of the imminent gale.

"It's going to be a dirty night," he said, a little lamely.

By eight o'clock, with the water now well over the mudflats, the seas had become steep and vicious. The wind that had earlier been blowing in savage, erratic puffs, developed into a full-blooded gale, and was violently rattling the large windows at the seaward side of the clubhouse.

Several members, whose boats were still on the moorings, came down in the evening, professedly for a quiet drink at the bar, but their fleeting, anxious glances towards the gathering night betrayed their real apprehension.

Fellowes, who normally went off duty at seven during the week, still lingered unobtrusively but reassuringly in the store-room. When the commodore arrived, suitably clad in duffle coat and sou'wester, he seemed to enlarge rather than allay the general feeling of anxiety.

"A real beast of a night, sir," said one of the younger members whose own fourteen-footer had already begun to suffer under the battering of the great curling combers swirling in from the sea.

The commodore grunted. He felt irritated that *Tumbril* was still at her moorings, and hadn't yet been taken to the yard.

"Where's Fellowes?" he demanded, after taking a professional look at the mounting waves.

FELLOWES heard his call and came in silently. "We're in for a bit of a dusting," said the commodore, when he appeared. "Did you check *Tumbril's* moorings before the sea got up?"

"Yes, sir. She'll be all right."

"And the others?"

"I went round them all, sir. They're all secure."

The commodore considered the position, much as he might have considered the prospects of engaging the enemy on a cold, wet night.

"I think you'd better stand by with the Aldis, just in case there's any trouble."

"Yes, sir. I've got it ready."

There seemed to be little to complain of. "We should have had *Tumbril* up last weekend," was all the commodore could say.

As Fellowes moved out on to the wind- and spray-swept veranda, some of the other members came across from the bar and stood at the window. The gale seemed to be increasing with the flood, and the thunder of the breakers as they crashed against the shingly beach vibrated through the clubhouse, numbing the spectators into a hushed, bewildered silence.

The powerful Aldis lamp flickered on and began to stab the darkness, its pencil beam groping out into a strange and terrible new world. Caught in its hard, white light, the driving wraiths of spray from the curling wave-tops scurried above their watery kingdom like frantic devils. The black water itself, flecked with foam, had now the appearance of a sea of heaving rocks, splitting upwards into thousands of flinty fragments and falling back into sullen, murmuring valleys. And above it all howled the music of the gale, a vast, invisible mass of space, slamming itself against the shore.

Several of the smaller, open boats were beginning to suffer. They had shipped a great deal

of water and were riding sluggishly between the waves, too punch-drunk to lift themselves out of the way of the next seething fistful of water that exploded against their slender hulls. And as the beam of light probed expectantly from boat to boat, it revealed a mounting toll of damage.

One of the dinghies had sunk, two of the eighteen-footers were well down by the bows, and from one of them, Carslake's *Levantine*, the cockpit cover had been ripped and was tearing itself to ribbons against the thin wire backstays. *Tumbril*, plunging her long, slender bows into each succeeding wave, seemed to be meeting the challenge safely and comfortably enough.

"My God!" said a voice suddenly. "There goes *Appalachia*."

As if unable to stand the helplessness of her position any longer, *Appalachia*, the newest of the Class boats, had spewed her ringbolt and several planks of foredeck out into the sea and was swaying drunkenly, hysterically, in towards the beach.

Fellowes, sickened and horrified by the sight, abandoned his post beside the lamp and hurried down to the water's edge. But even as he got there, the struggling yacht poised for a moment above him on the hissing crest of a wave, then, with a crash that broke her in two and spat her planks along the shingle, disintegrated noisily against the hard, unyielding stones.

Shocked, Fellowes returned to the Aldis lamp and moved the beam away from the empty mocking space where *Appalachia* had once lain. In his dazed state, he seemed to sense in the vicious, unrelenting wind and the sledgehammer blows of the sea a new and terrifying challenge; a challenge that echoed the contempt of the commodore and merged into the general pattern of persecution that he had come to know so well. All his life he had been afraid of fear—of the monster always at his back.

"*The trouble with that fellow,*" mocked the wind and the sea, "*is he hasn't got any guts. . . .*" For a moment he felt like turning and running away, far inland, away from the giant forces that opposed him, away from the thundering sea and the great, duffle-coated figure who stood regarding him icily from the clubhouse window.

He turned the light slowly towards the *Tumbril*, half fearing, half hoping, to see it bury itself for ever beneath the waves. But she was still there, still riding the storm, still defiantly echoing the part he had to play.

"Fellowes, for God's sake, man!" The commodore's voice came to him above the noise of the gale, freezing him inside, paralysing him. "Look at her foredeck . . . . for Pete's sake do something!"

STANDING to one side of the blinding beam, Fellowes peered into the darkness. At first he could see nothing untoward, only the white parabolas of spray curling across her hull like lazy rocket trails. Then, as she lifted her long, tapering bow, he saw it. Two of the wooden bitts securing her mooring chain had been wrenched out of their seating and were lying dislocated across the foredeck. The bottom of the posts themselves were wedged beneath the thin wooden deck and had prised up several canvas-covered planks. By some improbable freak the mooring chain was still firmly holding, though with each successive wave the yacht's position became more and more precarious.

There was nothing, he realized in that sickening moment, he could do. Nothing. Unless. . . . He licked his lips nervously.

"Do something, man!" shouted the commodore, who had come out on to the veranda. "For God's sake, don't just stand there. She'll go any minute."

Carslake was also there, murmuring something about "best to ignore the madman," but Fellowes scarcely heard. There was, he knew, just a chance if he could somehow get aboard and secure the mooring cable to something firmer, like the foot of the mast; or even if he could let go an anchor to help take the strain off the weakened bitts.

"Take the lamp, sir," said Fellowes, calmly, and left the veranda. As he ran down to the water's edge, he could hear the commodore shouting: "What the hell are you going to do now?"

For an instant he hesitated. The full force of the gale and the bite of the spray stunned him. Then, slipping out of his trousers and sweater, he flung himself into the sea.

Once in the water he felt safer and more certain of himself. It was like climbing into bed and slowly dimming the lights. . . .

The blinding beam of the Aldis thrust mercilessly at him, driving him on blindly into the heaving, straining water. As each wave broke over him, it pressed him down, holding him for a moment in a world of swirling, silent green, only releasing him as he felt his lungs almost bursting. But about his struggling battle there was now a bold pattern of determination. It was more, he knew, than just a wild, hysterical gesture. It was probably the greatest testing point in his whole life. . . .

How long he had been in the water he could scarcely tell. His eyes were smarting with the salt, and his feet had become leaden and useless. His arm, as it curved out of the sea and clawed at the next icy patch of water, was aching with cramp and fatigue. Just two more strokes, he decided; just two more . . . two more . . .

For no reason understandable to himself, he struggled on. Then ahead of him suddenly loomed something white and solid. The light from the shore settled on its gleaming paint and dazzled him with its reflection, but the gold leaf lettering on the small counter stern registered in his tired brain. *T-U-M-B-R-I-L.*

As the short overhang of the stern came swinging down near his head, he lifted a weary arm and clung feebly to one of the large towing cleats.

For a moment he allowed the yacht to lift him and plunge him back into the water in its violent see-saw pitching; and then, as a wave burst in his face and threatened to drag him clear, he hauled himself aboard and toppled, coughing, into the sea-drenched well.

FOR several minutes he lay where he had fallen, his hands opening and closing convulsively with each new shivering spasm. And then, with his eyes half closed, he lifted himself weakly to his knees and crawled forward along the slippery, dancing cabin-top.

It was not until he got to the foredeck that he realized the yacht was no longer secured to anything. She was adrift.

From somewhere near at hand, the roar of the waves breaking against the beach momentarily petrified him, and forced him to cling rigidly to the mast. In a huge, slackening arc, the Aldis seemed to be swaying up and down in the sky.

It could now, he realized, be only a matter of minutes—seconds, perhaps—before the yacht was lifted high into the air and hurled down upon the shore. With her he, too, would be broken into small, meaningless pieces.

He released his hold on the mast, and crawled forward on the narrow, rolling deck to where the anchor lay neatly stowed against the coaming. With unfeeling fingers, he untied the thin, strong lashing that held the anchor in place and flung the anchor over the side, taking care to control the sudden powerful rush of the chain as it followed. Although it strained and bit into his hand, he eased it out gently, checking it every few seconds in an attempt to bring *Tumbril* back head to wind.

With the chain now stretched out taut ahead, he began to haul it in, taking in the few inches of slack each time the yacht rode down the face of a wave, and holding it firmly as she reared up and tried to twist her head away from the next. Inch by inch she moved back against the wind, until she was a reasonably safe distance from the clamouring deathbed of the shore.

Fellowes still scarcely knew what had happened. His hands had been scraped and pinched by the links of the chain, and the pain had begun to swell through his arms and body. His legs, weak and soggy from the battle, could no longer support him on the heaving deck, and as he crawled slowly aft, the whole frenzied night seemed to close in upon him, burying him in its freezing, crumbling darkness. But even as he slipped finally into total insensibility, he was aware that in some unaccountable way he had defeated it, defeated them all, the sea, the storm, the commodore.

THE commodore stood silently on the veranda at the clubhouse. He was both bewildered and appalled by what he had witnessed. The *Tumbril*, riding somewhat timorously to her anchor, was still afloat and had been spared certain destruction. Somewhere aboard her, lying battered and unconscious, was the man who had effected this miracle—the man he had chided and taunted and bullied and despised.

"Don't you think you'd better go inside?" suggested Carslake, aware of the commodore's inner struggle. "It's getting extremely cold."

"I think," said Captain Britten, half turning away, "I'd rather stay out here, if you don't mind. And—er—it might be a good idea if someone phoned for a doctor. And," he added, "an ambulance."

The commodore was the first aboard the *Tumbril* when the tide went down. He waded out through eighteen inches of cold, muddy water to reach her and found Fellowes where he had fallen, his face and hands blue with cold.

With the care and strength of a father picking up his small, wounded son, he gathered him in his arms and carried him back to the waiting ambulance.

It was not until they were nearly at the hospital that Fellowes opened his eyes.

The huge, dark wall of water that towered above him formed slowly into the commodore, his face strangely drawn and anxious.

"You'll be all right, Fellowes," said a distant and unfamiliar voice. "You'll be all right."

He struggled against the tight, choking pain in his chest and throat, for some answer, he knew, was still demanded of him.

"She'll be all right now, sir," he managed, playing with the echo in his brain. "She'll be all right on her anchor."

But as he slipped back into his delirium, there was no longer the same violence in the waves; no longer the strength in the wind or the spray. THE END

Major Helen fights to save sinners

Major Helen Nelson

AT six o'clock one morning, the telephone rang in Major Helen Nelson's flat. "My wife has gone to London to live with another man," said a distressed voice with a West Country accent. "Please stop her."

Major Helen scrambled out of bed. She knew exactly what to do, for it was all laid down in the 535-page book of rules that orders the life, work and pleasure of every Salvation Army officer.

Read Marjorie Earl's revealing article about Major Helen, and her war on the Devil, in JOHN BULL next week.

Reg Simpson hits out for brighter cricket

by EDWIN PACKER

A fast-scoring player himself, he believes that safety first makes for dull play. That was why, in protest, he bowled under-arm lobs at Trent Bridge last season

Hit for six. Simpson in action during last year's second Test against South Africa at Lord's

ONE DAY IN THE EARLY SUMMER of 1935 a group of boys was at net practice on the playing fields of Nottingham High School. As each boy had his knock, the cricket coach, standing nearby, commented, advised and instructed. Towards the end of the practice a lad with tanned, well-cut features took up a natural stance at the wicket and played all kinds of bowling without difficulty. The coach watched critically, but this time in silence, until the boy had finished batting. Then, turning to a master, the coach said: "Simpson doesn't need my help. He knows every stroke of the game. It's a pleasure to watch him bat."

Since his high school days, Reg Simpson, of Notts and England, has given the same enjoyment to thousands who like fast scoring and brilliant fielding. He is now thirty-two, a six-footer with a fine head of wavy black hair and the sloping shoulders and easy grace of a born athlete. He believes in smartness on the field both in appearance and action. "Clothes affect behaviour," he says. "You feel better and play better when you are well turned out."

Simpson became famous as a protagonist for brighter cricket in June, 1951, when he bowled under-arm lobs to Wooller, the Glamorgan captain, in a match at Trent Bridge. The score was 224 for four, and Wooller and Willie Jones were batting. Only twelve runs had been scored from fifteen overs, nine of which were maidens, when Simpson made his gesture of protest. It was a one-man demonstration with considerable psychological effect, for in the next twenty minutes four wickets fell for eleven runs.

The Umpire's Decision

"Spectators had been showing their displeasure at the dull cricket long before I decided to bowl," he says. "But, of course, it is not only batting that needs speeding up. Every facet of the game should be worth watching. Brighter cricket is better cricket, good for the game, better for the players and best of all for the spectators."

He knows that it is the man going through the turnstile who keeps first-class cricket alive. He likes to tell the story of the occasion when W. G. Grace was obviously out l.b.w. to the first ball of a match bowled by a youngster of eighteen. The youngster appealed confidently. "Not out," declared the umpire, and added in an undertone to the bowler: "They've come to see him bat, you young fool, not to see you bowl. Remember, it's a sixpenny gate today!" Simpson adds: "Spectators have got to be studied more than ever now, for cricket is big business. When it ceases to entertain it will go bankrupt."

An inquiry was started in March this year by the Advisory County Committee of the M.C.C. to consider means for more attractive play. In Reg Simpson's view, chief responsibility falls on the captains who need the backing of their county committee. He is a great believer in the sporting declaration to keep cricket alive and give the spectators the thrill of a fighting finish.

Pickles Recommended

There is no shortage of suggestions for brightening cricket by aiding bowlers, or persuading batsmen to score more quickly. "One famous cricketer wanted all Test players to have pickles for breakfast, lunch and tea," says Simpson. "He based his suggestion on the fact that Alletson, who batted number nine for Notts in 1911, made forty in the hour before lunch in a match against Sussex. He had pickles for lunch, and then put on fifty in the next fifteen minutes, and eighty-nine in the following fifteen."

More serious suggestions made in recent years are that an inch should be taken off the width of the bat, and that wickets should be widened by an inch or made six inches taller. Bowlers

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have their supporters who propose that resin and sticking plaster should be used, the one to give a grip of the ball, the other to prevent soreness of the spin finger.

"We must remember," says Simpson, "that alterations in the rules affect more than county cricketers. Wickets fall fairly quickly in club cricket, and if we make them more vulnerable the weekend cricketer may lose interest."

Simpson's own idea is that the county championship scoring system should be amended. He would like to see three points awarded to any side scoring 250 runs in the first eighty overs of their first innings (about four hours' play) irrespective of whether they won or lost the game. He suggests that a team winning either the match or first innings points should, if they batted for more than five and a half hours in the first innings, be penalized by forfeiting four points for the complete win, or two points on the first innings win.

Leave The Bat Alone

He particularly dislikes the suggestion that the width of the bat should be reduced. "The tendency today is for players to use a lighter bat, and in my opinion there is no need for it. A big man needs a heavy bat. It gives him more power and he can score more with it. Reducing the bat's width will not make for brighter play; some batsmen could stonewall with a fishing rod."

Simpson is talking about what he knows, for he is employed by a firm of sports equipment manufacturers to grade and select bats. Trade returns have indicated that lighter bats are more in demand than ever before.

His employers allow him time to play first-class cricket, and in this respect his career follows the Australian model.

"The fact that the Australians are not full-time cricketers is an advantage," he says. "They all have a job of work to do during the week, because they only play at weekends. You don't get the situation over there, as you do sometimes in England, where a county player is tempted to play safe for the sake of his average, feeling that his job depends on it. Safety first is understandable, but it's dull cricket. In time it will kill the goose which lays the golden eggs."

No Mid-week Play

That Australia, whose population is a sixth of Britain's, should be able to beat us at cricket is no mystery to Reg Simpson. "The Australians don't get stale," he says. "They have a longer summer, but rarely play in mid-week. Their best players are in grade cricket, and play with up-and-coming youngsters. When those youngsters are promoted to state and Test cricket they don't feel nervous because they are accustomed to play with the top-notchers in grade cricket. Furthermore, the Australians choose their Test players from all who play cricket. Over here our choice is limited to county and university players, although we have plenty of good players in league cricket."

The keenness of the Australians impressed Simpson. "Even the umpires are keen. One we had in an up-country game happened to be the chairman of the club we were playing. Freddie Brown was batting, and the ball hit him on the leg. 'How's that?' cried the umpire before anyone else could shout, and answered his own appeal by giving the England captain out, leg before."

Simpson is always on the alert in the field, his interception and catching are just as attractive to the spectator as his batting. "A team on its toes in the field can make the cricket appear much more exciting than it really is," he says. He believes that every fielder should study the style of the batsman and try to anticipate his strokes. This means that a fielder, though given a general direction about positions, can move according to his anticipation of the batsman's stroke as the bowler delivers the ball.

"When anticipation is good, batsmen begin to feel frustrated. They start taking risks in an effort to score, and wickets fall." He does not believe in placing a fielder in an exact spot. "One captain I played under in a holiday game did," he says. "It was a big ground, and he directed me out into the deep, pointing to a car parked on the edge of the outfield. When I got there he still wasn't satisfied. 'Move over by the other headlamp,' he yelled."

Although Simpson played for Notts Club and Ground when a schoolboy of fifteen, his entry into the county first eleven was in 1946, when on demobilization leave from the R.A.F. He scored a double century. Since then his rise to fame has been rapid.

In 1950 he was the first batsman to reach 1,000 runs (beating Edrich by ten minutes) and 2,000. He had the highest aggregate of the season with 2,576 runs, and finished second in the batting averages with 62.82.

He had been married only a few weeks before embarking on the South African tour of 1948-49. "When I became engaged, a club mate assured me that marriage was a great help to a cricketer," he says. "He boasted that one of the things his wife did for him was to pack his cricket bag. In the middle of the dissertation he broke off and started searching wildly through the bag. His wife had forgotten to put in his cricket boots."

It is ironic that the winning of the wooden spoon in the county championship table by Notts last season should coincide with Reg Simpson's first season as captain of the side. The decline of Notts, due to bowling weakness, has been apparent for years. Yet, if a fast-scoring championship had been introduced in 1951 based on the number of runs scored per hundred balls, Notts would have been in second place with forty-eight. Essex would have been top with fifty, and Warwickshire, the official champions, fourth with forty-five.

Stale From Winter Tour

Simpson finished the 1951 season with a county aggregate of 1,593, and an average of 51.38. His temporary loss of form was attributed by many to the cares of captaincy. "It was not that, the winter tour of Australia had made me stale. In August I felt for the first time in my life, that I never wanted to see another bat."

He was not the only one. "Another member of the England side felt the same, and told me that he was even dreaming about cricket," says Simpson. "A wag suggested he should see a psychiatrist, who would make him dream of something else. 'What! And lose my turn to bat?' was the indignant answer."

R. W. V. Robins, of Middlesex, is believed by Simpson to be one of the best captains of modern times. "Every time Robins won the toss he used to tell his side, 'We're batting. I want you chaps to be all out by five o'clock, or have enough runs on the board for me to declare.' That was in 1947—the year Middlesex won the championship."

THE END

THE HUMAN MACHINE

Petty tyrants

LOTS of unnecessary trouble is caused in human affairs by people who assume they have "rights" over other people. Neither relationship nor friendship confers "rights." To think otherwise is to come dangerously near being tyrannical. The happy association of people is not due to "rights" claimed and fulfilled, but to mutual trust and respect. Unless firmly based on these, not even affection can endure.

by ROFFE THOMPSON

THEY DO IT WITH MIRRORS

Continued from page 9

her with me and you can wait and bring her cases up."

She slammed the door on Miss Marple, ran round to the other side, jumped into the driving seat, and they purred swiftly out of the station.

Looking back, Miss Marple noticed Edgar Lawson's face.

"I don't think, dear," she said, "that Mr. Lawson is very pleased."

Gina laughed.

"Edgar's a frightful idiot," she said. "Always so pompous about things. You'd really think he *mattered*!"

Miss Marple asked: "Doesn't he matter?"

"Edgar?" There was an unconscious note of cruelty in Gina's scornful laugh. "Oh, he's bats anyway."

"Bats?"

"They're all bats at Stonygates," said Gina. "I don't mean Lewis and Grandam and me and the boys—and not Miss Bellever, of course. But the others. Sometimes I feel I'm going a bit bats myself, living there."

They swung out of the station approach and accelerated up the smooth-surfaced, empty road. Gina shot a swift sideways glance at her companion. "Have you been to Stonygates before?"

"No, never. I've heard a great deal about it, of course."

"It's pretty ghastly, really," said Gina cheerfully. "A sort of Gothic monstrosity. What Steve calls Best Victorian Lavatory period. But it's fun, too, in a way. Only, of course, everything's madly earnest, and you tumble over psychiatrists everywhere underfoot. Lewis is quite dippy about it all. He's going to Aberdeen next week because there's a case coming up in the police court—a boy, with five previous convictions."

"The young man who met me at the station—Mr. Lawson. He helps Mr. Serrocold, he told me. Is he his secretary?"

"Oh, Edgar hasn't brains enough to be a secretary. He's a *case*, really. He used to stay at hotels and pretend he was a V.C. or a fighter pilot and borrow money and then do a flit. I think he's just a rotter. But Lewis goes through a routine with them all. Makes them feel one of the family and gives them jobs to do and all that to encourage their sense of responsibility. I dare say we shall be murdered by one of them one of these days." Gina laughed merrily.

Miss Marple did not laugh.

STONYGATES was, as Gina had said, a vast edifice of Victorian Gothic—a kind of temple of plutocracy. Philanthropy had added to it various wings and outbuildings which, while not positively dissimilar in style, had robbed the structure as a whole of any cohesion or purpose.

"Hideous, isn't it?" said Gina affectionately. "There's Grandam on the terrace. I'll stop here and you can go and meet her."

Miss Marple advanced along the terrace towards her old friend.

From a distance, the slim little figure looked curiously girlish in spite of the stick on which she leaned and her slow and obviously rather painful progress. It was as though a young girl was giving an exaggerated imitation of old age.

"Jane," said Mrs. Serrocold.

"Dear Carrie Louise."

Yes, unmistakably Carrie Louise. Strangely unchanged, strangely youthful still, although, unlike her sister, she used no cosmetics or artificial aids to youth. Her hair was grey, but it had always been of a silvery fairness and the colour had changed very little. Her skin had still a rose-leaf pink and white appearance, though now it was a crumpled rose leaf. Her eyes had still their starry innocent glance, and her head had kept its eager, birdlike tilt.

"I do blame myself," said Carrie Louise in her sweet voice, "for letting it be so long. *Years* since I saw you, Jane dear."

Arms linked, the two old ladies walked together to a side door. In the doorway a gaunt, elderly lady met them. She had an arrogant nose, a short haircut and wore stout, well-cut tweeds.

"George has taken over the disciplining of the dog"

She said fiercely: "It's absolutely crazy of you, Cara, to stay out so late. You're absolutely incapable of taking care of yourself."

"Don't scold me, Jolly," said Carrie Louise pleadingly. She introduced Miss Bellever to Miss Marple.

"This is Miss Bellever, who is simply everything to me. Nurse, dragon, watchdog, secretary, housekeeper and very faithful friend."

Juliet Bellever sniffed, and the end of her big nose turned rather pink, a sign of emotion. "I do what I can," she said gruffly. "This is a crazy household. You simply can't arrange any kind of planned routine."

"Darling Jolly, of course you can't. I wonder why you ever try. Where are you putting Miss Marple?"

"In the Blue Room. Shall I take her up?" asked Miss Bellever.

"Yes, please do, Jolly. And then bring her down to tea. It's in the library today, I think."

Carrie Louise was standing by the window in the library when Miss Marple came down.

"What a very imposing house this is," said Miss Marple. "I feel quite lost in it. Did you have to make many alterations for the sake of the college?"

"Oh, yes—heaps of them. We've just kept a kind of block in the middle of the house as it was—the great hall and the rooms off and over. But the east and west wings have been completely remodelled. All the rooms partitioned off and divided up, so that we have offices, and bedrooms for the teaching staff, and all that. The boys are all in the college building—you can see it from here."

Miss Marple looked out towards where large red brick buildings showed through a belt of sheltering trees. Then her eyes fell on something nearer at hand, and she smiled a little.

"What a very beautiful girl Gina is," she said.

Carrie Louise's face lit up. "Yes, isn't she?" she said softly. "It's so lovely to have her back here again. I sent her to America at the beginning of the war—to Ruth. Gina thought she would like to do some war work—and she met this young man. A week later they were married."

Miss Marple looked out of the window again at the two young people standing near the lake.

"They're a remarkably handsome couple, too," she said. "I don't wonder Gina fell in love with him!"

"Oh, but that—that isn't Wally." There was, quite suddenly, a touch of embarrassment, of restraint, in Mrs. Serrocold's voice. "That's Steve—the younger of Johnnie Restarick's two boys. He runs our dramatic branch. We have a theatre, you know, and plays—we encourage all the artistic instincts. Steve is so keen and enthusiastic. It's wonderful what life he's put into the whole thing."

"I see," said Miss Marple slowly.

Her long-distance sight was good, and she saw very clearly the dark, handsome face of Stephen Restarick as he stood facing Gina, talking eagerly. Gina's face she could not see, since the girl had her back to them, but there was no mistaking the expression in Stephen Restarick's face.

"It isn't any business of mine," said Miss Marple, "but I suppose you realize, Carrie Louise, that he's in love with her."

"Oh no. . . ." Carrie Louise looked troubled. "Oh no, I do hope not."

"You were always up in the clouds, Carrie Louise. There's not the least doubt about it."

Before Mrs. Serrocold could say anything, Lewis came in from the hall, carrying some open letters in his hand.

HER husband, Lewis, was a short man, not particularly impressive in appearance, but with a personality that immediately marked him out. Ruth had once said of him that he was more like a dynamo than a human being. He usually concentrated entirely on what was immediately occupying his attention and paid no attention to the objects or persons who were surrounding them.

"A bad blow, dearest," he said. "That boy, Jackie Flint. Back at his tricks again. You know we found he'd always been keen on railways—and both Maverick and I thought that if he got a job on the railways he'd stick to it and make good. But it's the same story. Petty thieving from the parcels office. Not even stuff he could want or sell. That shows that it *must* be psychological."

"Lewis—this is my old friend, Jane Marple."

"Oh, how d'you do," said Mr. Serrocold absently. "So glad—they'll prosecute, of course. A nice lad, too, not too many brains, but a really nice boy. Unspeakable home he came from. I—"

He suddenly broke off, and the dynamo was switched on to the guest.

"Why, Miss Marple, I'm so delighted you've come to stay with us for a while. It will make such a great difference to Caroline to have a friend of old days with whom she can exchange memories. She has in many ways a grim time here—so much sadness in the stories of these poor children. We do hope you'll stay with us a very long time."

Miss Marple felt the magnetism and realized how attractive it would have been to her friend. That Lewis Serrocold was a man who would always put causes before people she did not doubt for a moment. It might have irritated some women, but not Carrie Louise.

Lewis Serrocold sorted out his other letters, murmuring absently to his wife: "Tea's in, dearest."

"I thought we were having it here. I told Jolly."

"No, it's in the hall. The others are there."

Carrie Louise linked her arm through Miss Marple's and they went into the great hall. A plump, middle-aged woman with grey hair sat behind the tea table and Mrs. Serrocold said: "This is Mildred, Jane. My daughter Mildred. You haven't seen her since she was a tiny girl."

MILDRED STRETE was the person most in tune with the house that Miss Marple had so far seen. She looked exactly like a canon's widow, respectable and slightly dull. She was a plain woman with a large, unexpressive face and dull eyes. She had been, Miss Marple reflected, a very plain little girl.

"And this is Wally Hudd—Gina's husband."

Wally was a big young man, with hair brushed up on his head and a sulky expression. He nodded awkwardly and went on cramming cake into his mouth.

Presently, Gina came in with Stephen Restarick and several other people. Miss Marple found it all a little bewildering and was glad to go to her room and lie down after tea.

There were still more people at dinner. First, young Doctor Maverick, who was either a psychiatrist or a psychologist—Miss Marple was rather hazy about the difference—and whose conversation, conducted almost entirely in the jargon of his trade, was practically unintelligible to her. There were also two bespectacled young men who held posts on the teaching side, a Mr. Baumgarten, who was an occupational therapist, and three intensely bashful youths who were doing their "house guest" week.

After dinner, Lewis Serrocold and Dr. Maverick went away to the latter's office. The occupational therapist and the schoolmasters went away to some lair of their own. The three "cases" went back to the college. Gina and Stephen went to the theatre to discuss Gina's idea for a set. Mildred knitted an indeterminate garment and Miss Bellever darned socks. Wally sat in a chair gently tilted backwards and stared into space. Carrie Louise and Miss Marple talked about old days. The conversation seemed strangely unreal.

Edgar Lawson alone seemed unable to find a niche. He sat down and then got up restlessly.

"I wonder if I ought to go to Mr. Serrocold," he said rather loudly. "He may need me."

Carrie Louise said gently: "Oh, I don't think so. He was going to talk over one or two points with Dr. Maverick this evening."

"Then I certainly won't butt in! I

"They Do It With Mirrors," Agatha Christie's fifty-third book, marks the reappearance of Miss Marple, whose fans include Queen Mary, Clement Attlee and Wilfred Pickles.

Miss Marple made her début in 1930 in *Murder at the Vicarage*—later a West End stage success—and has helped to push her creator's sales to over 50,000,000.

Agatha Christie, now a grey-haired grandmother, is at present in the Middle East, helping her husband, archaeologist Max Mallowan. Even when living in a tent in the desert, she writes, tapping out with three fingers, on a portable typewriter, words which will later be printed in practically every language in the world.

Agatha Christie

shouldn't dream of going where I wasn't wanted. I've already wasted time today going down to the station when Mrs. Hudd meant to go herself."

"She ought to have told you," said Carrie Louise. "But I think she just decided at the last moment."

"You do realize, Mrs. Serrocold, that she made me look a complete fool! A complete fool!"

"No, no," said Carrie Louise, smiling. "You mustn't have these ideas. Gina always has these sudden impulses—she didn't mean to upset you."

"Oh yes, she did. It was done on purpose—to humiliate me——"

"Oh, Edgar——"

"You don't know half of what's going on, Mrs. Serrocold. Well, I won't say any more now except good night."

Edgar went out, shutting the door with a slam behind him.

Miss Bellever snorted: "Atrocious manners."

"He's so sensitive," said Carrie Louise vaguely.

Mildred Strete clicked her needles and said sharply: "He really is a most odious young man. You shouldn't put up with such behaviour, Mother."

Wally Hudd spoke for the first time that evening. He said: "That guy's crackers. That's all there is to it! Crackers!"

GENTLY eluding her hostess the next morning, Miss Marple went out into the garden. Experience had taught her that if people were troubled in mind, they would gladly unburden themselves to strangers; indeed, they would actively seek out strangers. It was with this thought in mind that she strolled gently alongside the herbaceous border in a prominent part of the garden. Her little stratagem was almost immediately effective, for hardly five minutes had elapsed before Edgar Lawson came nervously into view.

"Good morning, Mr. Lawson," said Miss Marple gaily. "I do so love gardens, don't you? It's about all an old and useless woman can find to do. Now, I don't suppose *you* ever bother your head about such things. You have so much real and important work to do. Being in a responsible position here, with Mr. Serrocold. You must find it all most interesting."

He answered quickly, almost eagerly: "Yes—yes—it is interesting."

"And you must be of the greatest assistance to Mr. Serrocold."

His face darkened. "I don't know. I can't be sure. It's what's *behind* it all——"

He broke off. Miss Marple watched him thoughtfully. A pathetic, undersized young man, in a neat sports jacket. A young man that few people would look at twice, or remember if they did look. . . .

There was a garden seat nearby and Miss Marple drifted towards it and sat. Edgar stood frowning in front of her.

"I'm sure," said Miss Marple brightly, "that Mr. Serrocold relies on you a *great* deal."

"I don't know," said Edgar. "I really don't know." He frowned and almost absently sat down beside her. "I'm in a very difficult position."

"Yes?" said Miss Marple.

Edgar sat staring in front of him. "This is all highly confidential," he said suddenly.

"Of course," said Miss Marple.

"If I had my rights——"

"Yes?"

"I might as well tell you. . . . You won't let it go any further, I'm sure?"

"Oh, no." She noticed he did not wait for her disclaimer.

"My father—actually, my father is a very important man."

This time there was no need to say anything. She had only to listen.

"Nobody knows except Mr. Serrocold. You see, it might prejudice my father's position if the story got out." He turned to her. He smiled. A sad, dignified smile. "You see, *I'm Winston Churchill's son.*"

"Oh," said Miss Marple. "I *see.*"

Edgar Lawson went on, and what he said had the familiarity of a stage scene. "There were reasons. My mother wasn't free. Her own husband was in an asylum—there could be no divorce—no question of marriage. I don't really blame them. At least, I think I don't. . . . He's done, always, everything he could. Discreetly, of course. And that's where the trouble has arisen. He's got enemies—and they're against me, too. They've managed to keep us apart. They watch me. Wherever I go, they spy on me. Even here, I'm not *safe*. They're here, too. Working against me. Making the others dislike me. Mr. Serrocold says that isn't true—but Mr. Serrocold doesn't know. Or else—I wonder—sometimes I've thought——"

He broke off. He got up. "This is all confidential," he said. "You do understand that, don't you? But if you notice anyone *following* me—spying, I mean—you might let me know *who it is*!"

He went away then—neat, pathetic, insignificant. Miss Marple watched him and wondered. . . .

A VOICE spoke, interrupting her thoughts. "Nuts," it said. "Just nuts." Walter Hudd was standing beside her. His hands were thrust deep in his pockets and he was frowning as he stared after Edgar's retreating figure.

"What kind of a joint is this, anyway?" he said. "They're all bughouse, the whole lot of them."

Miss Marple said nothing and Walter went on: "That Edgar guy—what do you make of him? Says his father's really Lord Montgomery. Doesn't seem likely to me. Not Monty! Not from all I've heard about him."

"No," said Miss Marple. "It doesn't seem very likely."

"He told Gina something quite different—some bunk about being really the heir to the Russian throne—said he was some Grand Duke's son or other. Hell, doesn't the chap know who his father really was?"

"I should imagine not," said Miss Marple. "That is probably just the trouble."

Walter sat down beside her, dropping his body on to the seat with a slack movement. He repeated his former statement. "They're all bughouse."

"You don't like being at Stonygates?"

The young man frowned. "Like it?" He shrugged. "I'm young and strong and ready to work. I'd got my bit put by and Gina had some, too, she told me. We were going to set up a gas station back home—Gina was willing. Just a couple of crazy kids, we were—mad about each other. Then Gina wanted to come here to England to see her grandmother. Well, that seemed fair enough. It was her home, and I was curious to see England, anyway. I'd heard a lot about it. So we came. Just a visit—that's what I thought."

The frown became a scowl. "But it hasn't turned out like that. We're caught up in this crazy business. Why don't we stay here?—make our home here?—that's what they say. Plenty of jobs for me. Jobs! I don't want a job feeding candy to gangster kids and helping them play at kids' games. . . . What's the sense of it all? This place makes me feel I'm tangled up in a spider's web. And Gina—I can't make Gina out. She's not the same girl I married over in the States. I can't—Goddam it—I can't even *talk* to her now. Aw, hell!"

Miss Marple said gently: "I quite see your point of view."

Wally shot a swift glance at her, and got up.

"Sorry to be talking to you this way," he apologized. For the first time, Miss Marple saw him smile. It was a very attractive smile and Wally Hudd was suddenly transfigured from an awkward, sulky boy into a handsome and appealing young man. "Had to get things of my chest, I suppose. But too bad picking on you."

"Not at all, my dear boy," said Miss Marple.

"You've got other company coming," said Walter Hudd. "That dame doesn't like me, so I'll quit. So long, ma'am. Thanks for the talk."

He strode away and Miss Marple watched Mildred Strete coming across the lawn to join her.

"I see you've been victimized by that terrible young man," said Mrs. Strete, rather breathlessly, as she sank down on the seat. "What a tragedy that is."

"A tragedy?"

"Gina's marriage. It all came about from sending her off to America. I told mother at the time it was most unwise. But mother has always been quite unreasonable where Gina is concerned. The child was always spoilt and indulged in every way. There was absolutely no need to take her away from Italy in the first place. . . ."

She seemed to be making up her mind how to continue. Miss Marple said softly: "Gina is a very lovely girl."

"Hardly in behaviour," said Mrs. Strete. "Everyone but mother notices how she is carrying on with Stephen Restarick. Quite disgusting, I call it. Admittedly she made a very unfortunate marriage, but marriage is marriage and one should be prepared to abide by it. After all, she chose to marry that dreadful young man."

"Is he so dreadful?"

"Oh, dear, Aunt Jane! He really looks to me quite like a gangster. And so surly and rude. He hardly opens his mouth. And he always looks so dirty and uncouth."

"He is unhappy, I think," said Miss Marple mildly.

"I really don't know why he should be—apart from Gina's behaviour, I mean. Everything has been done for him here. Lewis has suggested several ways in which he could try to make himself useful—but he prefers to skulk about doing nothing." She burst out: "Oh, this whole place is impossible—quite impossible. Lewis thinks of nothing but these horrible young criminals. And mother thinks of nothing but him. Everything Lewis does is right. Look at the state of the garden—the weeds, the overgrowth. And the house—nothing properly done. Oh, I know a domestic staff is difficult nowadays, but it can be got. It's not as though there were any shortage of money. It's just that nobody *cares*. If it were *my* house. . . ." She stopped.

"I'm afraid," said Miss Marple, "that we have all to face the fact that conditions are different. These large establishments are a great problem. It must be sad for you, in a way, to come back here and find everything so different. Do you really prefer living here to—well—somewhere of your own?"

MILDRED STRETE flushed. "After all, it's my home," she said. "It was my father's house. Nothing can alter that. I've a right to be here if I choose. And I do choose. If only mother were not so impossible! She won't even buy herself proper clothes. It worries Jolly a lot."

"I was going to ask you about Miss Bellever."

"Such a comfort having her here. She adores mother. She's been with her a long time now—she came in John Restarick's time, and was wonderful, I believe, during the whole sad business. I really don't know what mother would do without her." She was evidently going to say a good deal more, but at that moment Lewis Serrocold came into view. She said: "Here is Lewis. How odd. He seldom comes out in the garden."

It wasn't really odd at all, Miss Marple decided. The success of her device was making her a little blasé.

Mr. Serrocold came towards them in the same single-minded way that he did everything. He appeared not to notice Mildred, because it was only Miss Marple who was in his mind.

"I'm so sorry," he said. "I wanted to take you round our institution and show you everything. Caroline asked me to. Unfortunately I have to go off to Liverpool. The case of that boy and the railway parcels office. I shan't be back until the day after tomorrow. It will be splendid if we can get them not to prosecute."

Shaking her head and setting her lips primly, Mildred Strete got up and walked away.

Lewis Serrocold did not notice her go. His earnest eyes gazed at Miss Marple through thick glasses.

"You see," he said, "the magistrates nearly always take the wrong view. A prison sentence isn't the answer at all. Corrective training — constructional training like we have here."

Miss Marple burst firmly into speech. "Mr. Serrocold," she said. "Are you

FROM MY FAMILY ALBUM

CECIL was the name of this young man, and he hated it. "But I was stuck with it—my parents liked it—and I had to defend it against the gibes of other boys with plainer names, sometimes with my fists."

At the age of seven, he started drawing pictures of Scotsmen on the walls of the family home in Christchurch, New Zealand, and, by the time he was eleven, won a drawing contest.

"I had the fire for drawing in my stomach, and my perpetual scribbling kept me pretty much to myself. I was a lonely boy, but I am glad now that I was. A secret of success in becoming an artist is: *Don't be popular*. It takes up too much time, and you don't get enough chance to think things out."

He developed his talent to such an extent that by the age of twelve he was drawing cartoons for a local paper at 2s. 6d. each.

"When I was fourteen I held a job as a full-blown political cartoonist, and, besides that, I was selling drawings all over New Zealand. I also sent sketches by post to the comic papers in England. I sent so many that they were one of New Zealand's principal exports

in the years 1904-06. Only four were printed—and they were not paid for.

"Back at home, one of my jobs was making courtroom sketches. One day, when a murder trial was in progress, I was barred from entering. The judge found out how young I was.

"When I was sixteen, my parents wanted me to become a clergyman, but instead I went to Australia and joined the staff of the Sydney *Bulletin*. There I developed an interest in politics which inevitably led me on to London."

In London he stayed—and buried the name of Cecil.

Today he is a famous cartoonist. For his name, turn to page 30

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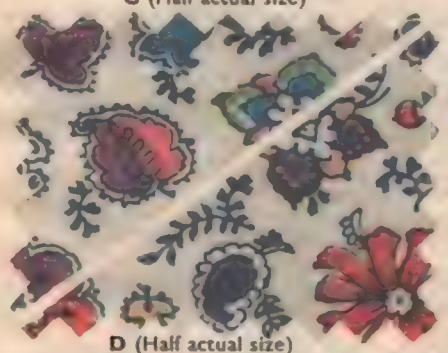

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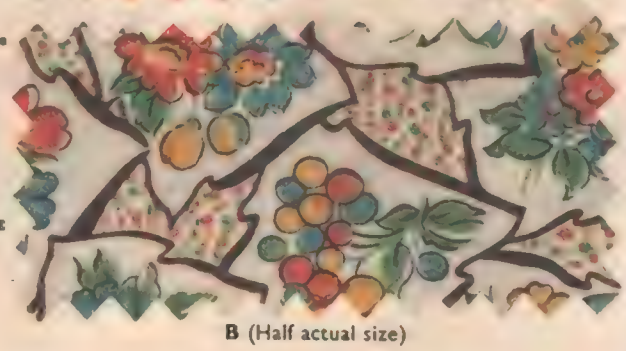

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quite satisfied about young Mr. Lawson? Is he—is he quite normal?"

A disturbed expression appeared on Lewis Serrocold's face. "I do hope he's not relapsing. What has he been saying?"

"He told me that he was Winston Churchill's son——"

"Of course, of course. The usual statements. He's illegitimate, as you've probably guessed, poor lad, and of very humble beginnings. He was a case recommended to me by a society in London. He'd assaulted a man in the street who he said was spying on him. All very typical—Dr. Maverick will tell you. I went into his case history. Mother was of a poor class but respectable family in Plymouth. Father a sailor—she didn't even know his name. . . . Child brought up in difficult circumstances. Started romancing about his father and later about himself. Wore uniform and decorations he wasn't entitled to—all quite typical. But Maverick considers the prognosis hopeful. If we can give him confidence in himself. I've given him responsibility here, tried to make him appreciate that it's not a man's birth that matters, but what he *is*. I've tried to give him confidence in his own ability. The improvement was marked. I was very happy about him. And now you say. . . ."

He shook his head.

"Mightn't he be dangerous, Mr. Serrocold?"

"Dangerous? I don't think he has shown any suicidal tendencies."

"I wasn't thinking of suicide. He talked to me of enemies—of persecution. Isn't that — forgive me — a dangerous sign?"

"I don't really think it has reached such a pitch. But I'll speak to Maverick. So far, he has been hopeful —very hopeful."

He looked at his watch. "I must go. But first I'll introduce you to Doctor Maverick, who will show you round."

They crossed the garden and passed through a palisaded gate and then came to the entrance gate of the college, a sturdily built, hideous, red brick building.

DR. MAVERICK, looking, Miss Marple decided, distinctly abnormal himself, came out to meet them, and Lewis Serrocold left her.

"Now, Miss — er — oh, yes, Miss Marple—I'm sure you're going to be interested in what we're doing here. In our splendid approach to this great problem. Mr. Serrocold is a man of great insight—great vision. It's a *medical* problem—that's what we've got to get the legal authorities to understand."

He paused. "Now first of all, I want you to see our initial approach to the problem. Look up."

Miss Marple looked up at the words carved over the large arched doorway.

RECOVER HOPE ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE

"Isn't that splendid? Isn't that just the right note to strike? You don't want to scold these lads—or punish them. That's what they're hankering after half the time, punishment. We want to make them feel what fine fellows they are."

"Like Edgar Lawson?" said Miss Marple.

"Interesting case, that. Have you been talking to him?"

"He has been talking to me," said Miss Marple. She added apologetically: "I wondered if, perhaps, he isn't a little *mad*?"

Dr. Maverick laughed cheerfully. "We're all mad, dear lady," he said as he ushered her in through the door. "That's the secret of existence. We're all a little mad. . . ."

On the whole it was rather an exhausting day. Enthusiasm in itself can be extremely wearing, Miss Marple thought. She felt vaguely dissatisfied with herself and her own reactions. There was a pattern here—perhaps several patterns, and yet she herself could obtain no clear glimpse of it or them. Any vague disquietude she felt centred round the pathetic but inconspicuous personality of Edgar Lawson. But for the life of her, Miss Marple did not see how that wrongness, whatever it was, affected her friend Carrie Louise. In the confused patterns of life at Stonygates, people's troubles and desires impinged on each other. But none of them (again as far as she could see) impinged on Carrie Louise.

When, on the following morning, Carrie Louise, dragging her feet a little as she walked, came and sat down on the garden seat beside her friend and asked her what she was thinking about, Miss Marple replied promptly:

"You, Carrie Louise."

"What about me?"

"Tell me honestly—is there anything here that worries you?"

"Worries me?" The other woman raised wondering, clear blue eyes. "But, Jane, what should worry me?"

"I don't know, dear. But you must surely have normal little worries—*you* know."

Carrie Louise said doubtfully. "I'm really not sure, Jane. Of course my being so free from cares is partly due to Jolly. Dear Jolly. She takes care of me as though I were a baby and quite helpless. She'd do anything for me. I feel quite ashamed sometimes. I really believe Jolly would murder someone for me, Jane. Isn't that an awful thing to say?"

"She's certainly very devoted," agreed Miss Marple.

"She gets so indignant." Mrs. Serrocold's silvery laugh rang out. "All our poor boys are in her view pampered young criminals and not worth taking trouble over. She thinks this place is damp and bad for my rheumatism, and that I ought to go to Egypt or somewhere warm and dry."

"Do you suffer much rheumatism?"

"It's got much worse lately. I find it difficult to walk. Horrid cramps in my legs. Oh, well—" again there came that bewitching, elfin smile, "age must tell."

Miss Bellever came out of the french windows and hurried across to them.

"A telegram, Cara, just come over the telephone. *Arriving this afternoon, Christian Gulbrandsen.*"

"Christian?" Carrie Louise looked very surprised. "I'd no idea he was in England."

"The oak suite, I suppose?"

"Yes, please, Jolly. Then there will be no stairs. Christian likes a room on the terrace."

Miss Bellever nodded and turned back to the house.

"Christian Gulbrandsen is my stepson," said Carrie Louise. "Eric's eldest son. Actually he's two years older than I am. He lives in America and is one of the trustees of the Institute—the principal trustee. How very annoying that Lewis is away. Christian hardly ever stays longer than one night. He's an immensely busy man."

Christian Gulbrandsen arrived that afternoon in time for tea. He was a big, heavy-featured man, with a slow, methodical way of talking. He greeted Carrie Louise with every sign of affection.

"And how is our little Carrie

"This ought to cheer you up a bit. Here's one that isn't a bill. It's a statement—. whatever *that* might be"

"Take one before going to bed, and the other if you wake up in the morning"

Louise? You do not look a day older. Not a day." He stood smiling down at her. A hand tugged his sleeve.

"Christian!"

"Ah." He turned. "It is Mildred. How are you, Mildred?"

"I've not really been at all well lately."

"That is bad. That is bad."

There was a strong resemblance between Christian Gulbrandsen and his half-sister Mildred. There was nearly thirty years' difference in age and they might easily have been taken for father and daughter. Mildred herself seemed particularly pleased by his arrival. She was flushed and talkative, and had chattered repeatedly during the day of "my brother," "my brother Christian," "my brother, Mr. Gulbrandsen."

"And how is little Gina?" said Gulbrandsen, turning to that young woman. "You and your husband are still here, then?"

"Yes. We've quite settled down, haven't we, Wally?"

"Looks like it," said Wally.

Gulbrandsen's small, shrewd eyes seemed to sum up Wally quickly. Wally, as usual, looked sullen and unfriendly.

"So here I am with all the family again," said Gulbrandsen.

His voice displayed a rather determined geniality—but in actual fact, Miss Marple thought, he was not feeling particularly genial. There was a grim set to his lips and a certain preoccupation in his manner.

Introduced to Miss Marple, he swept a keen look over her as though measuring and appraising this newcomer.

"We'd no idea you were in England, Christian," said Mrs. Serrocold.

"No, I came over rather unexpectedly."

"It is too bad that Lewis is away. How long can you stay?"

"I meant to go tomorrow. When will Lewis be back?"

"Tomorrow afternoon or evening."

"It seems then that I must stay another night."

"If you'd only let us know——"

"My dear Carrie Louise, my arrangements, they were made very suddenly."

"You will stay to see Lewis?"

"Yes, it is necessary that I see Lewis."

Miss Bellever said to Miss Marple: "Mr. Gulbrandsen and Mr. Serrocold are both trustees of the Gulbrandsen Institute. The others are the Bishop of Cromer and Mr. Gilfoy."

Presumably, then, it was on business concerned with the Gulbrandsen Institute that Christian Gulbrandsen had come to Stonygates. It seemed to be assumed so by Miss Bellever and everyone else. And yet Miss Marple wondered.

Once or twice the old man cast a thoughtful, puzzled look at Carrie Louise when she was not aware of it—a look that puzzled Carrie Louise's watching friend. From Carrie Louise he shifted his gaze to the others, examining them, one and all, with a kind of covert appraisal that seemed distinctly odd.

AFTER tea, Miss Marple withdrew tactfully from the others to the library, but rather to her surprise, when she had settled herself with her knitting, Christian Gulbrandsen came in and sat down beside her.

"You are a very old friend, I think, of our dear Carrie Louise?" he said.

"We were at school together in Italy, Mr. Gulbrandsen. Many, many years ago."

"Ah, yes. And you are fond of her?"

"Yes, indeed," said Miss Marple warmly.

"So, I think, is everyone. Yes, I truly think that. It should be so. For she is a very dear and enchanting person. Always, since my father married her, I and my brothers have loved her very much. She has been to us like a very dear sister. She was a faithful wife to my father and loyal to all his ideas. She has always put the welfare of others first."

"She has always been an idealist," said Miss Marple.

"An idealist? Yes. Yes, that is so. And therefore it may be that she does not truly appreciate the evil that there is in the world."

Miss Marple looked at him, surprised. His face was very stern. "Tell me," he said. "How is her health?"

Again Miss Marple felt surprised. "She seems to me very well—apart from arthritis—or rheumatism."

"Rheumatism? Yes. And her heart? Her heart is good?"

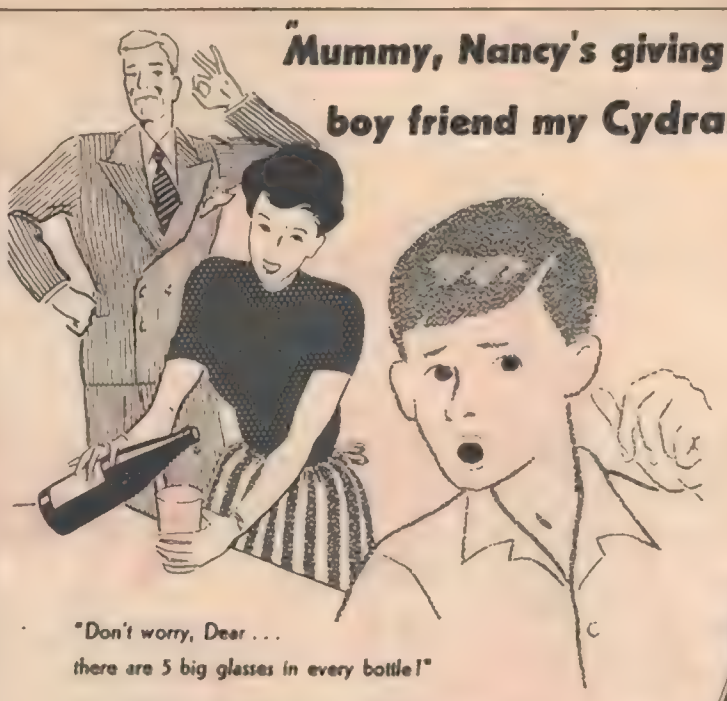
"As far as I know." Miss Marple was still more surprised. "But until yesterday I had not seen her for many years. If you want to know the state of her health, you should ask somebody in the house here. Miss Bellever, for instance."

"Miss Bellever. . . . Yes, Miss Bellever. Or Mildred?"

"Or, as you say, Mildred."

Miss Marple was faintly embarrassed. Christian Gulbrandsen was staring

"Mummy, Nancy's giving her boy friend my Cydrax..."



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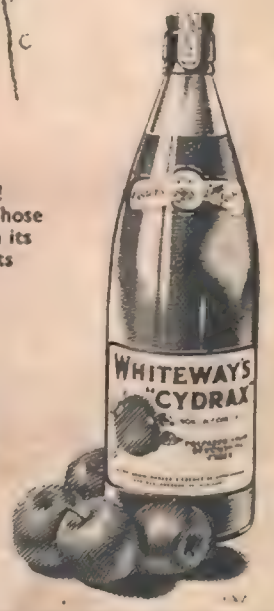

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KENSITAS — THAT'S GOOD VIRGINIA TOBACCO

at her very hard. "There is not between the mother and daughter a very great sympathy, would you say?"

"No, I don't think there is."

"I agree. It is a pity—her only child, but there it is. Now this Miss Bellever, you think, is really attached to her?"

"Very much so."

"And Carrie Louise leans on this Miss Bellever?"

"I think so."

Christian Gulbrandsen was frowning. He spoke as though more to himself than to Miss Marple. "There is the little Gina—but she is so young. It is difficult——" He broke off. "Sometimes," he said simply, "it is hard to know what is best to be done. I wish very much to act for the best. I am particularly anxious that no harm and no unhappiness should come to that dear lady. But it is not easy—not easy at all."

Mrs. Strete came into the room at that moment.

"Oh, there you are, Christian. We were wondering where you were. Doctor Maverick wants to know if you would like to go over anything with him."

"That is the new young doctor here? No—no, I will wait until Lewis returns."

"He's waiting in Lewis's study. Shall I tell him——"

"I will have a word with him myself."

Gulbrandsen hurried out. Mildred Strete stared after him and then stared at Miss Marple.

"I wonder if anything is wrong. Christian is very unlike himself. . . . Did he say anything. . . ."

"He only asked me about your mother's health."

"Her health? Why should he ask you about that?"

Mildred spoke sharply, her large, square face flushing unbecomingly.

"I really don't know."

"Mother's health is perfectly good. Surprisingly so for a woman of her age. Much better than mine, as far as that goes." She paused a moment before saying: "I hope you told him so?"

"I don't really know anything about it," said Miss Marple. "He asked me about her heart."

"Her *heart*?"

"Yes."

"There's nothing wrong with mother's heart. Nothing at all!"

"I'm delighted to hear you say so, my dear."

"What on earth put all these queer ideas into Christian's head?"

"I've no idea," said Miss Marple.

THE next day passed uneventfully to all appearances, yet to Miss Marple it seemed that there were signs of an inner tension. Christian Gulbrandsen spent his morning with Dr. Maverick in going round the Institute and in discussing the general results of the Institute's policy. In the early afternoon, Gina took him for a drive, and after that, Miss Marple noticed that he induced Miss Bellever to show him something in the gardens.

But in all this, Miss Marple could tell herself that she was being fanciful. The one really disturbing incident of the day happened about four o'clock. She had rolled up her knitting and had gone out in the garden to take a little stroll before tea. Rounding a straggling rhododendron, she came upon Edgar Lawson, who was striding along muttering to himself and who nearly ran into her.

He said: "I beg your pardon," hastily, but Miss Marple was startled by the queer, staring expression of his eyes.

"Aren't you feeling well, Mr. Lawson?"

"Well? How should I be feeling well? I've had a shock—a terrible shock."

"What kind of a shock?" said Miss Marple.

The young man gave a swift glance past her, and then a sharp, uneasy glance to either side. His doing so gave Miss Marple a nervous feeling.

"Shall I tell you?" He looked at her doubtfully. "I don't know. I don't really *know*. I've been so spied upon."

Miss Marple made up her mind. She took him firmly by the arm. "If we walk down this path. . . . There now, there are no trees or bushes near. Nobody can overhear."

"No—no, you're right." He drew a deep breath, bent his head and almost whispered his next words. "I've made a discovery. A terrible discovery."

"What kind of a discovery?"

Edgar Lawson began to shake all over. He was almost weeping. "To have trusted someone! To have believed . . . and it was lies—all lies. Lies to keep me from finding out the truth. I can't bear it. It's too wicked. You see, he was the one person I trusted, and now to find out that all the time he's been at the bottom of it all. It's *he* who's been my enemy! It's *he* who has been having me followed about and spied upon. But he can't get away with it any more. I shall speak out. I shall tell him I know what he has been doing."

"Who is *'he'*?" demanded Miss Marple.

Edgar Lawson drew himself up to his full height. He might have looked pathetic and dignified. But actually he only looked ridiculous. "I'm speaking of my father."

"Viscount Montgomery—or do you mean Winston Churchill?"

EDGAR threw her a glance of scorn. "They let me think that—just to keep me from guessing the truth. But I know now. I've got a friend—a real friend. A friend who tells me the truth and lets me know just how I've been deceived. Well, my father will have to reckon with *me*. I'll throw his lies in his face! I'll challenge him with the truth. We'll see what's he's got to say to that."

And suddenly breaking away, Edgar went off at a run and disappeared in the park.

Her face grave, Miss Marple went back to the house. "We're all a little mad, dear lady," Dr. Maverick had said. But it seemed to her that in Edgar's case it went rather further than that.

* * *

Lewis Serrocold arrived back at six thirty. He stopped the car at the gates and walked to the house through the park. Looking out of her window, Miss Marple saw Christian Gulbrandsen go out to meet him and the two men, having greeted one another, turned and paced to and fro up and down the terrace.

Miss Marple had been careful to bring her bird glasses with her. At this moment she brought them into action. Was there, or was there not, a flight of siskins by that far clump of trees?

She noted, as the glasses swept down before rising, that both men were looking seriously disturbed. Miss Marple leaned out a little farther. Scraps of conversation floated up to her now and then. If either of the men should look up, it would be quite clear that an enraptured bird watcher had her attention fixed on a point far removed from their conversation.

". . . how to spare Carrie Louise the knowledge . . ." Gulbrandsen was saying.

The next time they passed below, Lewis Serrocold was speaking.

". . . if it *can* be kept from her. I agree that it is she who must be considered. . . ."

Other faint snatches came to the listener.

"Really serious. . . ." "Not justified . . . too big a responsibility to take . . . we should, perhaps, take outside advice. . . ."

Finally, Miss Marple heard Christian Gulbrandsen say: "Ach, it grows cold. We must go inside."

Miss Marple drew her head in through the window with a puzzled expression. What she had heard was too fragmentary to be easily pieced together—but it served to confirm that vague apprehension that had been gradually growing upon her and about which Ruth Van Rydock had been so positive.

Whatever was wrong at Stonygates, it definitely affected Carrie Louise.

DINNER that evening was a somewhat constrained meal. Both Gulbrandsen and Lewis were absent-minded and absorbed in their own thoughts. Walter Hudd glowered even more than usual and for once Gina and Stephen seemed to have little to say either to each other or to the company at large. Conversation was mostly sustained by Dr. Maverick, who had a lengthy technical discussion with Mr. Baumgarten, the occupational therapist.

When they moved into the hall after dinner, Christian Gulbrandsen excused himself almost at once. He said he had an important letter to write.

"You have all you want in your room?" Carrie Louise asked.

"Yes, yes. Everything. A typewriter, I asked, and one has been put there. Miss Bellever has been most kind and attentive."

He left the great hall by the door on the left which led past the foot of the main staircase and along a corridor, at the end of which was a suite of bedroom and bathroom.

When he had gone out, Carrie Louise said: "Not going down to the theatre tonight, Gina?"

The girl shook her head. She went over and sat by the window overlooking the front drive and the court.

Stephen glanced at her, then strolled over to the big grand piano. He sat down at it and strummed very softly—a queer, melancholy little tune. The two occupational therapists and Dr. Maverick said good night and left. Walter turned the switch of a reading lamp and with a crackling noise half the lights in the hall went out.

He growled. "That darned switch is always faulty. I'll go and put a new fuse in."

He left the hall and Carrie Louise murmured: "Wally's so clever with electrical gadgets and things like that. You remember how he fixed that toaster?"

"It seems to be all he does do here," said Mildred Strete. "Mother, have you taken your tonic?"

Miss Bellever looked annoyed. "I declare I completely forgot tonight." She jumped up and went into the dining-room, returning presently with a small glass containing a little rose-coloured fluid.

Smiling a little, Carrie Louise held out an obedient hand. "Such horrid stuff and nobody lets me forget it," she said, making a wry face.

And then, rather unexpectedly, Lewis Serrocold said: "I don't think I should take it tonight, my dear. I'm not sure it really agrees with you."

Quietly, but with that controlled energy always so apparent in him, he took the glass from Miss Bellever and put it down on the big oak Welsh dresser.

Miss Bellever said sharply: "Really, Mr. Serrocold, I can't agree with you there. Mrs. Serrocold has been very much better since——"

She broke off and turned sharply.

The front door was pushed violently open and allowed to swing to with a crash. Edgar Lawson came into the big dim hall with the air of a star performer making a triumphal entry.

He stood in the middle of the floor and struck an attitude. It was almost ridiculous—but not quite ridiculous. Edgar said theatrically: "So I have found you, O, mine enemy!" He said it to Lewis Serrocold.

Mr. Serrocold looked mildly astonished. "Why, Edgar, what is the matter?"

"It's no use—you can't deceive me. I've found you out. You've been deceiving me, spying on me, working with my enemies against me."

Lewis took him by the arm. "Now, now, my dear lad, don't excite yourself. Tell me all about it quietly. Come into my office."

He led him across the hall and through a door on the right, closing it behind him. After he had done so, there was another sound, the sharp sound of a key being turned in the lock.

Miss Bellever looked at Miss Marple, the same idea in both their minds. *It was not Lewis Serrocold who had turned the key.*

Miss Bellever said sharply: "That young man is just about to go off his head in my opinion. It isn't safe."

"He had something in his pocket," Gina said. "He kept feeling it."

Stephen murmured as he took his hands from the keys: "In a film it would certainly have been a revolver."

Miss Marple coughed. "I think, you know," she said apologetically, "it *was* a revolver."

From behind the closed door of Lewis's office the sound of voices had been plainly discernible. Now, suddenly, they became clearly audible. Edgar Lawson shouted while Lewis Serrocold's voice kept its even, reasonable note.

"Lies—lies—lies, all lies. *You're* my father. I'm *your* son. You've deprived me of my rights. *I* ought to own this place. You hate me—you want to get rid of me!"

There was a soothing murmur from Lewis and then the hysterical voice rose still higher. It screamed out foul epithets. Edgar seemed rapidly losing control of himself. Occasionally words came from Lewis—"calm—just be calm—you know none of this is true. . . ." But they seemed not to soothe, but on the contrary to enrage the young man still further.

INSENSIBLY, everyone in the hall was silent, listening intently to what went on behind the locked door of Lewis's study. Nobody appeared, for the moment, able to move.

"I'll make you listen to me," yelled Edgar. "I'll take that supercilious expression off your face. I'll have revenge, I tell you. Revenge for all you've made me suffer."

The other voice came curtly, unlike Lewis's usual unemotional tones. "Put that revolver down!"

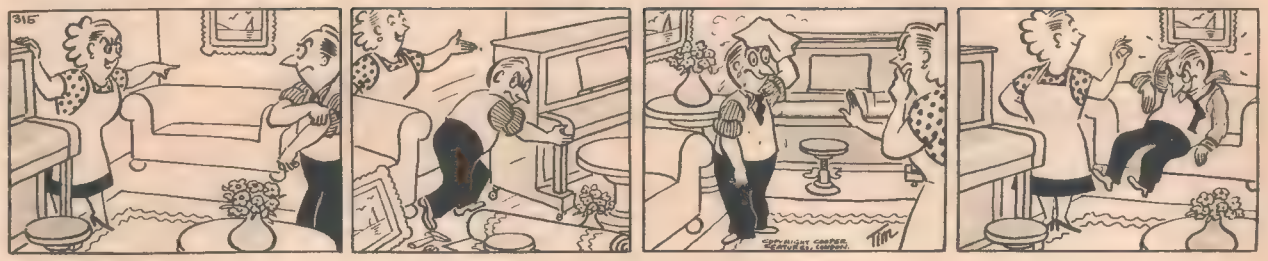
Gina cried sharply: "Edgar will kill him. He's crazy. Can't we get the police or something?"

Carrie Louise, unmoved, said softly: "There's no need to worry, Gina. Edgar loves Lewis. He's just dramatizing himself, that's all."

Edgar's voice sounded through the door in a laugh that Miss Marple had to admit sounded definitely insane. "Yes, I've got a revolver—and it's loaded. No, don't speak, don't move. You're going to hear me out. It's you who started this conspiracy against me and now you're going to pay for it."

He went on for some time in a high, mad voice, until what sounded like the report of a firearm made them

OH, JOHNNY! — *by TIM*



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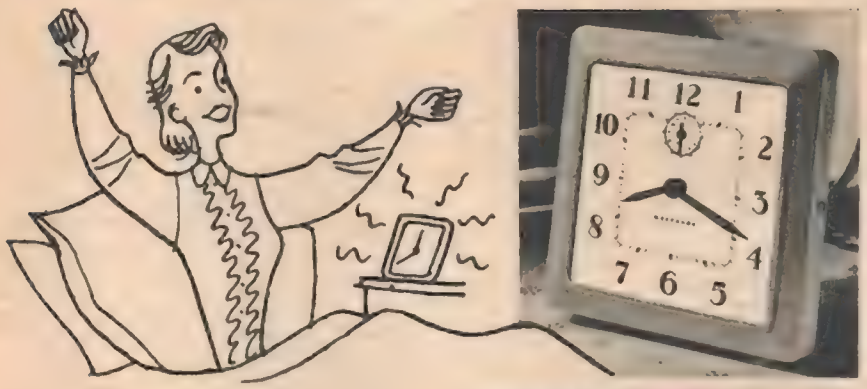

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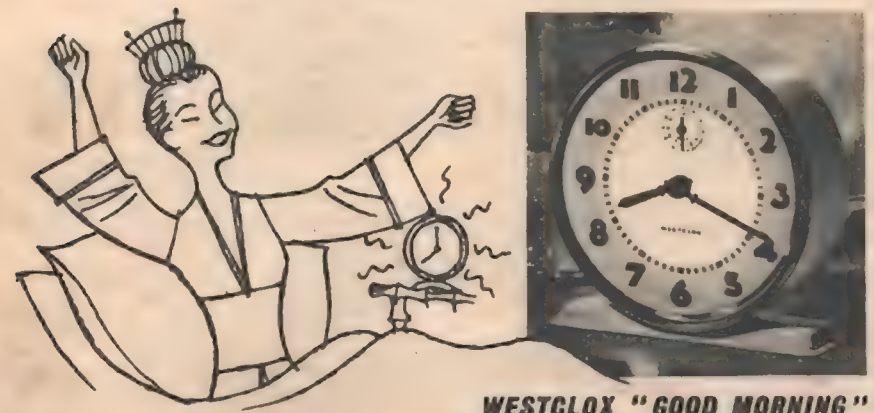

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all start, but Carrie Louise said: "It's all right, it's outside—in the park somewhere."

Behind the locked door, Edgar was still raving. "You sit there looking at me—looking at me—pretending to be unmoved. Why don't you get down on your knees and beg for mercy? I'm going to shoot, I tell you. I'm going to shoot you dead! I'm your son, your unacknowledged, despised son. You wanted me hidden away, out of the world altogether, perhaps. You set your spies to follow me—to hound me down. You plotted against me. You, my father! My father. I'm only a bastard, aren't I? Only a bastard. You went on filling me up with lies. Pretending to be kind to me, and all the time—all the time. . . . You're not fit to live. I won't let you live." Again there came a stream of obscene profanity. Miss Bellever suddenly came out of her attitude of frozen stupor, strode to the door and hammered on it. But it was a stout door and, realizing she would not be able to force it, she turned suddenly and almost ran out of the hall.

Edgar seemed to pause for breath and then he shouted out:

"You're going to die—to *die*. You're going to die *now*. Take *that*, you devil, and *that*!"

Two sharp cracks rang out—not in the park this time, but definitely behind the locked door.

Somebody—Miss Marple thought it was Mildred—cried out: "Oh, God, what shall we do?"

There was a thud from inside the room and then a sound, almost more terrible than what had gone before, the sound of slow, heavy sobbing.

Somebody strode past Miss Marple and started shaking and rattling the door. It was Stephen Restarick.

"Open the door! Open the door!" he shouted.

Miss Bellever came back into the hall. In her hand she held an assortment of keys.

"Try some of these," she said breathlessly.

At that moment, the fused lights came on again. The hall sprang into life again after its eerie dimness. Behind the study door, that wild, desperate sobbing went on.

WALTER HUDD, coming lazily back into the hall, stopped dead and demanded: "Say, what's going on round here?"

Mildred said tearfully: "That awful young man has shot Mr. Serrocold."

"Please." It was Carrie Louise who spoke. She got up and came across to the study door. Very gently she pushed Stephen Restarick aside. "Let me speak to him."

She called—very softly—"Edgar . . . Edgar . . . let me in, will you? Please, Edgar."

They heard the key fitted into the lock. It turned and the door was slowly opened. But it was not Edgar who opened it. It was Lewis Serrocold. He was breathing hard as though he had been running, but otherwise he was unmoved.

"It's all right, dearest," he said. "Dearest, it's quite all right."

"We thought you'd been shot," said Miss Bellever gruffly.

Lewis Serrocold frowned. He said with a trifle of asperity: "Of course I haven't been shot."

They could see into the study by now. Edgar Lawson had collapsed by the desk. He was sobbing and gasping. The revolver lay on the floor where it had dropped from his hand.

"But we heard the shots," said Mildred.

"Oh, yes, he fired twice."

"And he missed you?"

"Of course he missed me," snapped Lewis.

Miss Marple did not consider that there was any "of course" about it. The shots must have been fired at fairly close range.

Lewis Serrocold said irritably: "Where's Maverick? It's Maverick we need."

Miss Bellever said: "I'll get him. Shall I ring up the police as well?"

"Police? Certainly not."

"Of course we must ring up the police," said Mildred. "He's dangerous."

"Nonsense," said Lewis Serrocold. "Poor lad. Does he look dangerous?"

At the moment he did not look dangerous. He looked young and pathetic and rather repulsive.

His voice had lost its carefully acquired accent.

"I didn't mean to do it," he groaned. "I dunno what came over me—talking all that stuff. I must have been mad. Please, Mr. Serrocold, I really didn't mean to."

Lewis Serrocold patted him on the shoulder. "That's all right, my boy. No damage done."

"I might have killed you——"

Walter Hudd walked across the room and peered at the wall behind the desk. "The bullets went in here," he said. His eye dropped to the desk and the chair behind it. "Must have been a near miss," he said grimly. He stared down at the revolver where it lay on the floor. "Where the hell did you get that gun?" he demanded.

"Gun?" Edgar stared down at it. "Looks mighty like my gun," said Walter. He stooped down and picked it up. "By heck, it *is*! You took it out of my room, you creeping louse, you."

LEWIS SERROCOLD interposed between the cringing Edgar and the menacing American. "All this can be gone into later," he said. "Ah, here's Maverick. Take a look at him, will you, Maverick?"

Dr. Maverick advanced upon Edgar with a kind of professional zest. "This won't do, Edgar," he said. "This won't do, you know."

"He's a dangerous lunatic," said Mildred sharply. "He's been shooting off a revolver and raving. He only just missed my stepfather."

Edgar gave a little yelp and Dr. Maverick said reprovingly: "Careful, please, Mrs. Strete. You come with me, Edgar. Bed and a sedative—and we'll talk everything over in the morning."

Rising to his feet and trembling a little, Edgar looked doubtfully at the young doctor and then at Mildred Strete. At that moment, Miss Bellever's footsteps rang purposefully across the hall. She came in with her lips pursed together and a flushed face.

"I've telephoned the police," she said grimly. "They will be here in a few minutes."

Carrie Louise cried: "Jolly!" in tones of dismay.

Edgar uttered a wail.

Lewis Serrocold frowned angrily. "I told you, Jolly. I did *not* want the police summoned. This is a medical matter."

"That's as may be," said Miss Bellever. "I've my own opinion. But I had to call the police. Mr. Gulbrandsen's been shot dead."

To be continued next week

A NEW COMPANIONSHIP OF GOOD READING

TWO famous books that have been serialized in JOHN BULL—Paul Brickhill's real-life best-seller, *The Dam Busters*, and H. E. Bates's exciting and vivid novel, *The Scarlet Sword*—are among the first to be offered to members of The Companion Book Club.

This new club, sponsored by Odhams Press, provides a practical way of acquiring good books at low cost.

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Each month members will get a tip-top book—fiction or non-fiction—at greatly reduced prices. Watch for forthcoming announcements on how to join The Companion Book Club and a full list of the first volumes.

"Certainly our salaries are low. We want the kind of men who can meet and overcome obstacles"

HOW STAMMERERS BECOME SMOOTH TALKERS

Continued from page 15

Goldsmiths' and to his studio in Wigmore Street, where he used to give private lessons, it was no longer to teach singing. He had now perfected his method of correcting stammering, on which he had spent many years of study and experiment.

Hemery's approach to singing had always been scientific; it was when writing a textbook on the physiological basis of singing that he hit upon the clue which led him to his final conclusions about stammering.

For years he studied speech defects. He examined people in the act of stammering. He noted their mannerisms, their muscle action, their emotional background and environment; his files contain a comprehensive range of case histories. From the pattern of these, and after imitating them himself and recording his responses, he worked out an elaborate table of exercises which is the essential part of his method.

Hemery's first pupils were a doctor's two sons. Later the doctor sent him a boy of twelve and a girl of nine, who had picked up their stammering from an older relative. Even at that young age the children were among the most pitiful cases Hemery had ever met. Both had been excused reading at school and could not be sent on errands without a written note. A number of practitioners had recommended different treatments, without effect.

The results of Hemery's tuition were so spectacularly successful, and the parents and the doctor concerned were so energetic in recommending Hemery to everybody they knew, that news of his method spread quickly in London. In October, 1946, Hemery was invited to undertake voluntary work at St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington, and as the hospital's "speech therapist" he held a clinic there for eighteen months.

Pupils, Not Patients

Hemery objects to words like "treatment," "therapy" and "cure" being applied to his work, or a stammerer being described as a patient. His job, he says, is speech re-education. "I merely teach a stammerer to speak correctly, as I would teach a singer to sing correctly," he insists. "I am a teacher, nothing more. The people who come to me are my pupils."

His speech disability classes at Goldsmiths' College are now in their sixth year, though their scope is still not wide enough to make it possible for a stammerer to start from scratch for the normal college fee of 12s. 6d. a season of three terms. The fundamental speaking skills have to be taught privately and, until a scheme for doing this is officially permitted as part of class work, only pupils who have received such initial basic instruction can benefit from the classes.

The classes are self-governing, with Hemery like a benign dictator above all the various class officers and student committees that sit to grade the tests, or promote students through the stages of proficiency. At the back of the class, subdued and inarticulate, are the class beginners. Up on the dais, assured and verbose, are the shining exponents of the Hemery method, the student lecturers with distinction, there for the lesser ones to see and emulate.

The class meeting breaks for coffee and cakes at half time, and the advanced pupils come down from their dais to laugh and joke round a refectory table. From the conversation it is hard to believe that, not so long ago, most of them could hardly speak at all. A few speak carefully and with recollection, the odd one hesitates before the words pour out, but the majority are perfectly at ease. Yet behind each one is a background of frustration and embarrassment.

Wanted To Teach Music

There is Anthony John Smith, aged twenty-three, training to be a music teacher. Previously he had been a clerk in an accounts office, and hated it, but with a disability like his had never thought much of his chances of getting into the line he really liked. But within a year of beginning his speech re-education, he had applied for and received a grant which has enabled him to study for his new career. At the end of every term at his training college, pupils are given an elocution test. The last time, Smith came out on top.

The chairman himself, a hairdresser named William Arnold, once stammered so badly that he was often unable to ask a client what service she wanted.

Another pupil is intensely pleased with himself, having just been promoted to the position of assistant works manager. In the Army, during the evacuation from Dunkirk, he was leading a squad. A little ahead of the others, he came round a corner face to face with a German armoured car, and doubled back immediately. But instead of being able to warn his comrades, he stood with his mouth open, struggling violently with the words. Only by waving frantically was he able to prevent the party's being wiped out.

But perhaps the assistant class instructor's experience best illustrates the plight of the stammerer. Alan Burn had always stammered his worst under emotional stress. "I once had to say three words," he recalls. "I was with my girl and I wanted to tell her I loved her. We were walking along a road at the time. We covered a mile before I finally got it out." THE END

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Black, Tomette, Light Brown, Ox-blood and White

It really does open with a twist

WIN £500 and HOLIDAY in GLORIOUS DEVON!

"TORQUAY has a beauty and atmosphere all its own!" declared Mr. J. M. Thorpe (81 Hopedale Road, Sheffield), one of twenty readers in the *Bullets* Holiday Party last summer. "We had a wonderful time—hotel, food and JOHN BULL'S arrangements were perfect!"

At the same hotel the *Bullets* Seaside Party of 1952 will soon be gathering again; as winner of this week's £500, or other chief cheques, you and the holiday companion of your choice will be invited to enjoy at Torquay a round of holiday entertainment.

By courtesy of the Corporation, your concerts, deck-chairs, tennis, putting, bowls and dancing are *free*. And with your hotel bill and rail fares paid, plus a new £100 Sunshine Guarantee, what finer holiday could anyone wish for?

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£50, £25 each plus

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Free entertainments galore await you (and your companion) with *Bullets* Holiday Party at TORQUAY. Free rail travel and comfortable hotel accommodation provided by JOHN BULL through Cook's.

(Cash offer in lieu to winners unable to join the Torquay Party—Saturday, August 30, to Saturday, September 6.)

£100 SUNSHINE GUARANTEE

If at the Seaside Resort where you spend your Summer Holiday Week presented by JOHN BULL there are less than 30 hours of sunshine officially recorded during your visit, you become eligible for compensation under the new *Bullets* £100 Sunshine Guarantee. Any other winners who similarly go short of sunshine on a *Bullets* 1952 Seaside Holiday share £100 with you; payment as soon as official sunshine records are available to decide eligible winners.

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A fine roasting fowl accompanies each of the 20 chief prizes won with *Bullet* which was one of four or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

This Mad World
In The Economic Derby
Thanks To Stalin
Facing The Future
Wise Mother
From Pole To Pole
Holiday By The Sea
Treasured
If She Were 21 Again
In The Classroom
Television's Wonderful, But Utterly Useless
Something In The Air
His Rival
Man With A Horsewhip
Shrinking
To Sugar The Pill
Professor Crankpot
By Helicopter
Raining Cats And Dogs

Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions

When We've .....
In Effie's.....
"Here's Your .....!"
Before It Was.....
Delightful .....
Put In A ..... And

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are full rate. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests (in *Bulletin* and *Gazette*, dated May 24, and in JOHN BULL dated May 31), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

NOTE.—You may enclose *Bullets* and Xword entries in same envelope covered by single P.O. for combined entry-fee. Mark envelope "Combined," top left-hand corner.

POST ENTRY

"Bullets" 1,832 (or Xword 784) "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)

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£25: Mrs. M. E. Withers, 4 Flat, Lower Park House, Bewdley: A MASTERPIECE—INDEED—BEARING *Four* "SIGNATURES."

OTHER AWARDS: £20: Mrs. B. J. Lane, 55 Percival Road, Feltham, Middx: MAN IN BATTLE-DRESS—TOUGH? CAN'T FOOL *Mum*! £10: Mrs. E. Cole, Shalford Green, Panfield, Braintree: THE RIGHT SORT—OF SERMON—BRIGHT, SHORT. £5: L. J. Abrahamson, 36 Queensway, Bayswater, W.2: AT THE PRESS OF A BUTTON—WORLD'S TROUBLES AT *Fireside*! £5: J. Ashbridge, 25 Maplewell Road, Woodhouse Eaves, Leics: HALFWAY TO HEAVEN—IN HIGH HEELS—EFFIE! £5: F. T. Hammond, 38 Leonard Avenue, Sherwood, Nottingham: AT THE PRESS OF A BUTTON—NOSE—SHOP-WINDOW'S "FAIRYLAND OPENS." £5: Miss C. Macdonald, 91 Cowper Street, Hove: NATURE'S HEARD—IN GALE—*And* NIGHTINGALE! £5: W. F. Ralphs, 4 Forest View Avenue, Leyton, E.10: PULVERIZED—UNBUILT SCHOOLS—*Unbuilt* BOMBER!

For ten winners of £3, see *"Bullets" Bulletin*.

30 Prizes of £2, 50 of £1 and 2,000 "Good Shot" Prizes have also been posted.

CASH AND FOOD BASKETS FOR XWORDS!

This Way To Win

FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues below. Then, if you wish to enter *one* extra Answer to any *one*, *two* or *three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

Across Clues XWORD 784

1. People may be particularly glad of this if it's hot
3. The laundry's roundsman commonly collects bags of
7. Vigorous, sustained attack is likely to succeed on one or other this
9. What prisoners of war needed to get them over the frontier
10. Details of this may very well help burglar
11. Sound may be literally connected with
14. Failure is apt to await those who do this
15. May be seen in wood

Down Clues

2. Might perhaps snap if subject to too great a strain
4. Good this is often left behind by those who sail the seven seas
5. Barrow boy hates hitting a bad one
6. They don't all go at precisely the same speed
8. Coke is often carelessly this in domestic stoves
12. A young fellow's wise if he realizes his wife's mother is going to be one
13. May not be appreciated so much because of patronizing air

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XWORD 779 RESULT

WINNING WORDS. ACROSS: 1, Gambles. 4, Air. 5, Slate. 7, Gull. 9, Jest. 12, Rut. 13, Hope. 14, Verve. DOWN: 1, Guts. 2, Ball. 3, Rally. 6, Alps. 8, Bough. 10, Base. 11, Name.

NINE £100 SHARERS: J. Beard, St. Helens, Lancs; Mrs. D. Beckett, Sheffield; Miss E. Holdsworth, Ilkley; Miss L. Keig, Beaconsfield; Mrs. L. Lloyd, Llanymynech, Mont; Mrs. G. K. Palmer, London, N.8; T. W. Payne, Leicester; H. C. Southey, Bradford, Yorks; A. C. Webley, Southport.

Awards value £25 for 1st Runners-up shared by 97 entrants. Useful "Signpost" Prizes awarded to 2nd Runners-up.

THE MIGHTY BALCON

Continued from page 12

you £20,000 per picture for world distribution rights." Balcon had to admit that the offer was handsome; yet he refused it. He felt that if the film-making industry in Britain was ever to become strong and permanent, both production *and* distribution should remain in British hands. His stand was a courageous one, since independent production was at best a dangerous gamble, as he had previously proved, and since if he had accepted the M-G-M offer he could not have failed to profit. Balcon went on making pictures, including several with Novello, and it was in one of these, *The Lodger*, that Mick promoted a chubby young man named Alfred Hitchcock from the studio ranks into full-fledged director.

At this time Noël Coward had hit the West End with a terrific impact. His plays, *The Vortex* and *Easy Virtue*, were acclaimed by theatregoers, and Balcon snapped up the screen rights. "It was not Coward's fault that these did not make very successful films," Balcon acknowledged afterwards. "I had not properly weighed them up for the screen."

Hit That He Turned Down

Yet, when Coward offered Mick an original story, called *Concerto*, for £1,200, the producer—still concerned with conserving funds—offered to buy it by paying £100 a month. Coward accepted. Then Balcon had second thoughts. "Noël," he said, "can I surrender the story back to you?" Coward generously released him, and did not regret this action, for *Concerto* later became the sensationally successful *Bitter Sweet* and earned thousands for its author.

Towards the end of the twenties, rumours began to filter in from America about experiments with moving pictures which would also talk. "Some believed the rumours and some did not," Balcon said when explaining his own attitude later. "I knew what an upheaval it would cause if it were true. I didn't think, frankly, that the talking picture would make the grade." At this point, Balcon stopped and gazed into empty space for a while. Then he added, rather sadly: "I should have realized that silent films were through. I remember I took my daughter, Jill, who was only a few years old at the time, to see some Our Gang comedies. When the lights went up, she turned to me. 'Daddy,' she said, 'why don't they talk?' Out of the mouths of babes. . . ."

Ignoring Jill's pertinent query, Balcon went ahead with his programme of silent pictures. In the midst of this, the arrival from Hollywood of Al Jolson's *The Singing Fool* had the effect of a discovered time bomb. The whole industry in Britain went into a panic. Silent films, into which thousands of pounds had been poured, were everywhere in the process of production. Now, instead of representing sure-fire financial assets, they were a liability.

"Studio Is On Fire"

It was a terrible period of worry for Balcon. He realized that he would have to invest heavily in sound equipment at once, but the rush to buy had created a temporary shortage. While he waited his turn impatiently in the queue, he had the Islington studios soundproofed. Finally, the sound equipment did arrive, and Balcon hurried to dub talk into a hitherto silent film called *City of Play*. Then, one day, while this was going on, a studio worker excitedly telephoned Balcon in his City office. "For God's sake, come out here!" he yelled hysterically. "The whole studio is on fire!"

And it was. In a few hours the Islington building was gutted. The sound equipment, worth £50,000, was a twisted mass of charred wreckage. Balcon was out on the street again.

NEXT WEEK: Balcon's amazing battle with Louis B. Mayer

FROM MY FAMILY ALBUM

The photograph on page 22 is of David Low when a boy.

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With this coupon (which you can enclose with your entry) send P.O. 1s. for six weeks' *Bulletin* and *Gazette* at REDUCED SERIES RATE—first copy dated May 17 contains novel big "BRIGHTER HOME" offer.

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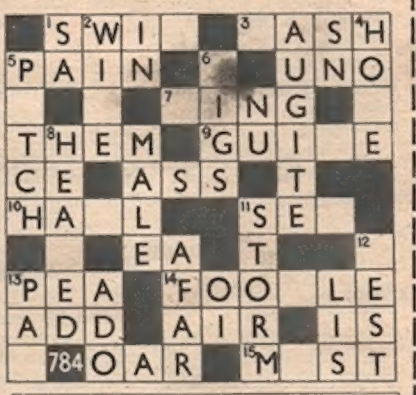
645

£100 and "FOOD-PLUS" Prizes for this XWORD

In adjudication all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.). Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.) and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.) Use ink not pencil.

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated May 17.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature indicates agreement to Rules.



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SURVIVAL AFTER DEATH

Continued from page 13

in visible and tangible form, with every feature just the same as when they lived here.

I afterwards attended several séances at which materialization was attempted. Up to the present, the only occasion within my experience when I believe my wife did genuinely materialize her physical form was at a Sunday evening séance at a private house near my own home. Her features were at first too misty for me to identify her with certainty, but when I applied the only test I could think of—saying something to make her laugh—I was delighted when her face creased all over in a special way that had given me particular pleasure when she was on this earth.

I have no doubt, as I pursue my investigations, that I shall later have a chance of witnessing better demonstrations of these more advanced phenomena.

The climax of my own investigations to date came only a few weeks ago.

Since I began my inquiries early in 1949, I had accumulated a remarkable amount of evidence and experiences. But I had not been able to achieve any of the more striking results without a professional medium being present.

I knew that I would not be satisfied—and would probably not be able to satisfy a sceptical world—unless I could achieve some of these things without any professionalism entering into it at all, and in my own home.

At last, I got into touch with a very gifted non-professional medium and was able to persuade him to visit my home "circle" in my Kensington flat a few Sundays ago. For two hours, I and the members of my "circle" had the most remarkable experiences.

A number of friends and relatives from the "spirit world" came and spoke to us in a completely convincing way—one of them a famous journalist whose voice and phrasing I recognized perfectly from my own knowledge of him while he was here. The trumpet used for the direct voice was levitated at incredible speed all round the room in pitch darkness, without touching any of the electric light shades or ornaments—an impossible feat by any human agency. And, of course, the conditions in my own flat were such that there could be no question of trickery.

Enough To Convince Sceptics

I consider that the evidence I have received in genuine direct voice has been enough to convince the greatest sceptic. I can find no explanation of a materialist nature to account for the voices of those who have passed over coming independently through the ether, speaking in their own voices and with their own mannerisms.

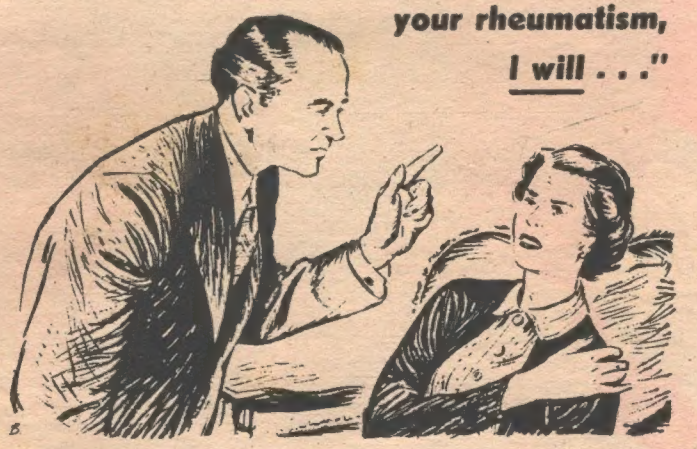
From time to time in my experiences, I have met with some fairly obvious cases of fraud—not necessarily deliberate or malicious but certainly disturbing. I would warn those who may be thinking of following my example always to be careful of possible fraud, and not to be too upset by inevitable confusions and mistakes. Let them recognize that contacts with the spirit world, if they are truly possible (as I now believe), cannot be as simple and straightforward as we would like. There are bound to be difficulties and disappointments.

I can only testify to the truth of my own personal experiences, and report that the evidence I have collected over these three years has caused me to reverse my earlier antagonism to the theory of spirit communication.

I am now quite convinced that life is continuous; that we shall undoubtedly meet our loved ones again when our jobs on this earth are completed; that as we sow here we shall reap hereafter, which means that we ourselves are creating in this life our conditions for the next; and that communication between the two worlds is now a scientific fact and one of the great essential truths, the knowledge of which it is our duty to spread throughout this bewildered world. THE END

This John Bull series by Reginald M. Lester is based on his forthcoming book, to be published in the early autumn by Harraps

"My dear, if you won't do anything about your rheumatism, I will . . ."



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